



***The Statesmen Series***

Edited by LLOYD C. SANDERS

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON

1784—1865

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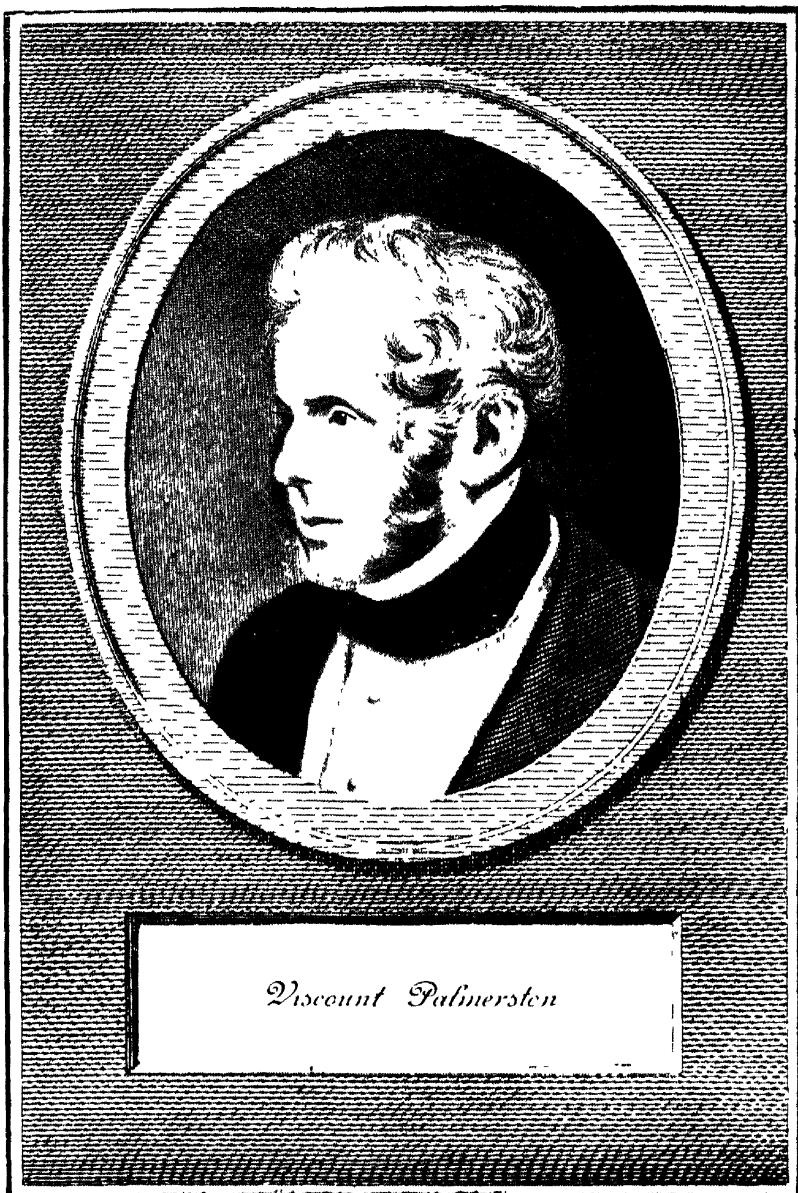
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# VISCOUNT PALMERSTON

BY  
LLOYD C. SANDERS



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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THE chief authority for Lord Palmerston's life is the biography of which the first three volumes were written by Lord Dalling—better known, perhaps, as Sir Henry Bulwer—and the fourth and fifth by Mr. Evelyn Ashley (1870–76). A condensed, and in many respects improved, edition of the whole was published by Mr. Ashley in 1879. It is a mine of information to the student of political history, and we may hope that the value of the concluding chapters may one day be increased by the publication of that fuller documentary evidence which has hitherto been apparently withheld from the necessity of keeping secrets of State. A small biography of Lord Palmerston was published by Anthony Trollope in 1881, but it contains little that is not to be found in Mr. Ashley's volumes.

Apart from this main source of knowledge, there is a very large quantity of matter illustrative of Lord Palmerston's private and public life. Lady Enfield tells us something about his youth in her *Life and Letters of the First Earl of Minto*; and much that is of interest,

about his personal character especially, is to be found in Sir Henry Holland's *Recollections*, Abraham Hayward's *Letters*, and his article in *Fraser's Magazine*, vol. xviii., and the *Life of Lord Shaftesbury* by Mr. Hodder. For an account of his career as a Tory statesman we have his own short autobiography, published as an appendix to the first volume of Lord Dalling's *Life*, which has been proved to be inaccurate on various points by Mr. E. Herries, in his *Memoir of the Right Hon. J. C. Herries*; and incidental notices in Plumer Ward's *Memoirs*, *Lord Colchester's Diary*, also in the *Croker Papers*, which continue to illustrate his official life down to 1855. With the formation of the Grey ministry commences the severe criticism of Greville, and with the beginning of the present reign the hardly less hostile comments of Sir Theodore Martin; still the evidence of both of these writers cannot be neglected by anyone who wishes to form a fair judgment of Lord Palmerston's merits. Scattered notices of his foreign policy during the Grey, Melbourne, and Russell ministries are to be found in the third volume of Lord Brougham's *Life and Times*, Earl Russell's *Reminiscences and Suggestions*, the *Life of Lord Melbourne* by Mr. McCullagh Torrens, and Raikes's *Journal*; while towards the close of this period, Lord Malmesbury's *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister* and Mr. Morley's *Life of Cobden* begin to be valuable sources of fact. The continental view of his policy is to be found particularly in the *Memoirs* of Prince Metternich and Baron Stockmar, the *Life of Count Saldanha*, and in Guizot's

*Mémoires* and *L'Histoire de Dix Ans*, besides works like Theodore Juste's *Memoirs of Leopold I.*, the histories of the Revolution of 1848 by Lamartine and Garnier Pagès, and Mr. Spencer Walpole's admirable *History of England*, which includes also the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. On the crisis of 1845 much valuable information is to be found in an article by Δ in the *Historical Review*; and the Spanish marriage intrigue is to be traced at length in the correspondence between Louis Philippe and Guizot, published by Taschereau in the *Revue Rétrospective* in 1848. Mr. Kinglake's views on Lord Palmerston's conduct as a member of the Aberdeen Cabinet may be compared with advantage with those set forth in the *Quarterly Review* of April 1877. During Lord Palmerston's first premiership and onwards, Lord Malmesbury and Mr. Morley continue to be instructive critics, and they are reinforced by Bishop Wilberforce, and Mr. Walter Bagehot in his sketch of *The English Constitution*. An excellent *précis* of English foreign policy from 1859 to 1865 is given by Lord Russell in the preface to the second part of his *Selected Speeches and Despatches*. On Lord Palmerston's later Italian policy abundant information may be found in Bianchi's *Storia Documentata della Diplomazia Europea in Italia*, in Mazade's *Vie de Cavour*, Cavour's *Letters and Despatches*, notably the private letters to Azeglio published by Bianchi under the title of *La Politique du Comte Camille de Cavour*. Not much original information, as far as Lord Palmerston is concerned, is to be

found in Blanchard Jerrold's *Life of Napoleon III.*, but his attitude towards German politics generally, and the Schleswig-Holstein question in particular, are abundantly illustrated in Count Beust's *Memoirs*, Count Vitzthum's *St. Petersburg and London*, which contains many personal reminiscences of Lord Palmerston, and Busch's *Our Chancellor* (Eng. trans., 1884).

C. S.

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# LIFE OF VISCOUNT PALMERSTON.

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## CHAPTER I.

LORD PALMERSTON AND TORYISM.

1807-1830.

The Temples—Lord Palmerston's father and mother—At Harrow, Edinburgh, and Cambridge—Attempts to get into Parliament—A Lord of the Admiralty—Maiden Speech—Secretary at War—The *New Whig Guide*—Palmerston in Society—His habits, tastes, and disposition—Development of his political views—Attempt to eject him from Cambridge—In the Canning, Goderich, and Wellington Cabinets—He resigns office—The Portuguese speech—Its faults and merits—Final breach with the Tory party.

THE Irish branch of the Temple family, from which Lord Palmerston sprang, was founded in the reign of Elizabeth by Sir William Temple, the grandson of Peter Temple, who was lord of the manors of Stowe and Butlers' Marston in the times of Henry VIII. Sir William, who was secretary to Sir Philip Sidney, and afterwards to Essex, and a typical example of the Elizabethan epoch, withdrew to Ireland after the break-down of the Essex rising. His son, Sir John Temple, was Master of the Rolls in Ireland, wrote an ultra-

English *History of the Irish Rebellion*, and at one time sat in the English House of Commons as burgess for Chichester. Of his family, the eldest son was Sir William Temple, the well-known diplomatist, statesman, man of letters, and patron of Swift; the second, Sir John, who rose to be Attorney-General and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, was Lord Palmerston's great-great-grandfather. The title dates from Sir John's son Henry, who was created a peer of Ireland by the titles of Viscount Palmerston, of Palmerston, co. Dublin, and Baron Temple, both in the peerage of Ireland.

In spite of their long connection with Ireland, the Temples remained for the most part English in interests, and almost entirely English in blood, notwithstanding Mr. Kinglake and other writers who talk about the Foreign Secretary's Celtic temperament. Lord Palmerston's father, the second Viscount, succeeded his grandfather in the year 1757, and sat for several years in the English Parliament as member for East Looe, Hastings, and Winchester. By his first wife, the daughter of a Cheshire baronet, he had no issue; he married secondly, Mary, the daughter of Mr. Benjamin Mee, of Bath,\* and the sister of a director of the Bank of England; and their eldest son Henry John was born at Broadlands, Hants, his father's English seat, on the 20th of October 1784. The second son, William, who was born in 1788, and died in 1856, became of some note as Minister to the Court of Naples; and of the two daughters, the eldest, Frances, married Admiral Sir William Banks, and the second, Elizabeth, the Right Hon. Lawrence Sullivan. The story that Lord Palmerston's father and mother became acquainted through

\* Chester's *Registers of Westminster Abbey*, p. 517, note.

the peer being thrown from his horse in Dublin, and carried into a neighbouring house where he was tenderly nursed by his future wife, appears entirely baseless, as there is no reason for connecting the Mees with the Irish capital. The family belonged to the west country. The marriage was solemnized at Bath, where some of Lady Palmerston's relations lived until comparatively recent times, and Miss Mee is described in the papers of the day as "of Fenchurch Street," which was in all probability the home of her brother. The anecdote appears to have been derived by Lord Palmerston's biographer, Lord Dalling, from a not particularly accurate life of the statesman by Mac-Gilchrist, although the latter declines to vouch for its accuracy, and adds, by way of detail, the evident figment that Mr. Mee was a respectable hatter, in middling circumstances. Mr. Ashley is possibly better informed when he describes him, in the revised edition of the biography, as a man of good family; but nothing seems to be certainly known about him.

Of Harry Temple's parents, the father seems to have been a good-humoured gentleman, with literary and artistic tastes, and a great fondness for society. "Lord Palmerston," writes Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Lord Minto, to his wife in 1786, "has not got to his second childhood, but only as far as his second boyhood, for no school-boy is so fond of a breaking-up as he is of a junket and pleasuring."\* From the same authority we gather that shortly before his death he was constantly repeating Wilkes's *mot*, that the Peace of 1763 was the peace of God which passeth all understanding. Broadlands, a house which had for nearly two cen-

\* *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, First Earl of Minto*, edited by his great-niece the Countess of Minto, vol. i. p. 107.

turies belonged to the family of St. Barbe was rebuilt by him from designs by "Capability" Brown, which were supplemented by plans furnished by Holland, the architect of Carlton House. It is a favourable specimen of the later Georgian period, with the inevitable Ionic portico, and is pleasantly situated on the east bank of the Test, close to Romsey, with its grand old abbey church. Here he made a collection of pictures of some importance, including the "Infant Academy," which was bequeathed to him by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Of the pair, Lady Palmerston seems to have been decidedly the more popular, and her strong common-sense, even spirits, and unselfish disposition endeared her to a large circle of friends, particularly to the Mintos. They lived chiefly at their houses in Park Lane and at East Sheen, paying, however, several visits to Italy, where their eldest boy strengthened that knowledge of the language which he had already acquired through an Italian tutor, and which stood him good service in after life. Believers in the doctrine of heredity will notice that the dispositions of both his parents were reproduced by Lord Palmerston in a very remarkable degree.

In due course Harry Temple went to Harrow, where he was a contemporary of Peel and Lord Althorp, though not, as is sometimes stated, of Lord Byron. There tradition represents him as acquitting himself with credit in a fight with a big boy named Salisbury; and in an amusing letter written in March 1798, to a young friend Francis Hare, a brother of Augustus and Julius Hare, he describes himself as having begun Homer's *Iliad* at the "beautifull" episode of Hector's parting from Andromache, as keeping up his Italian, regarding drinking and swearing as ungentlemanlike, and viewing

matrimony with qualified approval, "though he would be by no means precipitate in his choice." At the age of sixteen he repaired, according to the educational fashion of the time, to Edinburgh, where for three years he boarded with Dugald Stewart, and attended his lectures at the University, the parents paying £400 a year for those privileges.\* "In these three years," wrote Palmerston in after life, "I laid the foundation for whatever useful knowledge and habits of mind I possess." He seems, indeed, to have been a model pupil. Dugald Stewart described his character in the most enthusiastic terms; and Lord Minto, who was very fond of him, wrote to Lady Palmerston: "Harry is as charming and perfect as he ought to be; I do declare I never saw anything more delightful. On this subject I do not speak on my own judgment alone. I have sought opportunities of conversing with Mr. and also with Mrs. Stewart on the subject, and they have made to me the report which you have already heard from others, that he is the only young man they ever knew in whom it is impossible to find any fault. Diligence, capacity, total freedom from vice of every sort, gentle and kind disposition, cheerfulness, pleasantness and perfect sweetness, are in the catalogue of properties by which we may advertise him if he should be lost." To which Lord Minto might have added that he was an extremely handsome and well-grown lad; for such is distinctly the impression pro-

\* Lord Dalling, in his Life of Palmerston, reproduces a story, apparently from MacGilchrist, to the effect that Sir William Hamilton, when he edited Dugald Stewart's lectures on political economy, based his text on some notes taken in shorthand, and subsequently copied out by Henry Temple. A glance at Sir William Hamilton's preface to the lectures would have convinced him that the anecdote was entirely groundless, as the lectures are based on the notes of pupils called Bridges, Bonar, and Dow.

duced by the interesting water-colour portrait, painted in 1802 by Heaphy, which has recently been presented to the National Portrait Gallery. Harry Temple is there represented as looking dreamily at the spectator. The features have a family likeness to those of later life, but the whole expression of the face is completely unlike that of the very wide-awake individual whom Leech has handed down to posterity with a sprig in one corner of his mouth. At the age of eighteen, Harry Temple seemed to be about to develop into a statesman of the Burleigh rather than of the Carteret type, if indeed he took any part in public life at all ; and the change in his disposition between boyhood and manhood seems to have been even more abrupt and complete than is usually the case.

In 1803 he went to St. John's College, Cambridge, and proceeded in the ordinary course to his M.A. degree, without examination. Though he acquitted himself with credit at the College examinations, he made no permanent additions at Cambridge to his stock of knowledge.

Before he left Edinburgh, Palmerston lost his father, and in 1805 his mother died. Both of these blows were a great shock to him, and after the former, Lord Minto, finding him "entirely silent," wrote to his wife that "Harry had too little spring for his age." He probably modified his opinion when, in 1806, his young friend, though he was only just twenty-one, and had not taken his degree, stood for the University of Cambridge, where a vacancy had been created by the death of Mr. Pitt. Palmerston's competitors were Lord Henry Petty, afterwards Lord Lansdowne, and his old schoolfellow Lord Althorp, both of whom were to be his colleagues in the Grey and Melbourne ministries ; and

the Pitt party in the University being broken up, he found himself, as he had expected, at the bottom of the poll. William Wilberforce, in his diary, ascribes Palmerston's defeat in a great measure to the fact that he was supposed, though wrongly, to be an Anti-Abolitionist, whereas Lord Henry Petty was a staunch supporter of the negro cause. Anti-Abolitionist Palmerston can hardly have been, if his subsequent efforts for the suppression of the slave-trade are any criterion. At the general election of 1806 he was elected for Horsham with Lord FitzHarris, the son of his guardian, Lord Malmesbury ; but they were unseated on petition, and thought themselves lucky in being so, for, as he wrote in an autobiographical sketch of his early life, "in a short time came the change, and the dissolution in May 1807, and we rejoiced in our good fortune in not having paid £5,000 for a three months' seat." He then stood again for Cambridge, and again without success; though had he not, with great straightforwardness, persuaded his friends to divide their votes, according to the understanding with his Tory colleague, Sir Vicary Gibbs, instead of plumping, he would have been returned. Soon after this he came into Parliament for Newtown in the Isle of Wight, a borough of Sir Leonard Holmes. One condition was that he should never set foot in the place, even for the election, so jealous was the patron of the introduction of a new interest in the borough.

Palmerston had just before been nominated a Lord of the Admiralty through the interest of Lord Malmesbury. He was gazetted on the 3rd of April 1807, but it was not until the following February that he ventured to break the ice in the House of Commons. Though silent, however, he was not unobservant; for a journal

begun in June of the previous year, contains some very acute and detailed observations on the great events of the time, notably on the hideous ruin and combustion of the Austrian and Prussian armies at Ulm, Austerliz, and Jena. Very true is his remark that Napoleon, so far from concealing his designs, published even the most violent of his projected innovations; for instance, the formation of the Rhenish Confederacy, some time before they were put in execution, whereby the world became by degrees reconciled to them. Less fair is his sneer at the conduct of the Grenville ministry on the question of Catholic Emancipation: "They insisted," he says, "in retaining both their places and opinions."

It was upon continental affairs that the future Foreign Secretary made his maiden speech. Acting on secret information, which they were unable to produce, the Government had anticipated Napoleon by sending an expedition to seize the fleet of the Danes, with whom England was nominally at peace. It was entirely successful, but the Danes resisted, and Copenhagen was bombarded. On February 3, 1808, Mr. Ponsonby, the leader of the Opposition, moved for the production of papers. Canning, in a brilliant speech of three hours, demolished Ponsonby's arguments; and Palmerston, following somewhat on Canning's lines, pointed out that it would be impossible to produce the papers without breach of honour, and without shutting up future sources of information; while in answer to Windham, who had urged that England had been guilty of a violation of the law of nations, he made the telling rejoinder: "In the case before the House the law of nature is stronger even than the law of nations. It is to the law of self-preservation that England appeals for the justification of her proceedings."

“It was impossible,” wrote the *débutant* to his sister, “to talk very egregious nonsense in so good a cause,” and the speech was a success, though not thought worthy of a report in the *Times*. Palmerston was regarded as one of the rising men on the Tory side of the House; nevertheless, he was “infinitely surprised” when, in October, 1809, Mr. Perceval, obliged, owing to the quarrels in the party, to form his ministry out of untried material, offered him successively the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, a Lordship of the Treasury, and the Secretaryship at War, in the alternative of their being any of them declined by “Orator” Milnes, the father of the late Lord Houghton.\* Palmerston consulted Lord Mulgrave and Plumer Ward on the point, and wrote to Lord Malmesbury for advice. As the seat in the Treasury was only offered with the understanding that its occupant should speedily be advanced to the Chancellorship, the choice practically lay between the latter appointment and the Secretaryship at War. With admirable discretion he determined to risk nothing by premature ambition, and accepted the War Office without a seat in the Cabinet, rather than the more exalted position of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Cabinet minister.

Of course [he writes to Lord Malmesbury], one’s vanity and ambition would lead one to accept the brilliant offer first proposed; but it is throwing for a *great stake*, and where much is to be gained, *very much* also is to be lost. I have always thought it unfortunate for anyone,

\* So Palmerston told his friend Plumer Ward (*Memoirs of R. P. Ward, Esq.*, edited by the Hon. E. Phipps, vol. i. p. 249). In his autobiography Palmerston says, evidently incorrectly, “he [Perceval] said he had offered it [the Chancellorship] to Milnes, who had declined it.” See also Palmerston’s letters to Lord Malmesbury in Bulwer’s *Palmerston*.

and particularly a young man, to be put above his proper level, as he only rises to fall the lower. Now, I am quite without knowledge of finance, and never but once spoke in the House.

The fear of a breakdown in the House of Commons seems, indeed, to have been his chief deterrent. Besides, he thought that the Government would not last long, and that it was therefore not advisable to be identified with it more closely than was absolutely necessary. "I left him," wrote Plumer Ward, "inclining to the Secretary at War, and admired his prudence, as I have long done the talents and excellent understanding, as well as the many other good qualities as well as accomplishments, of this very fine young man."

To the War Office, accordingly, the very fine young man went, and at the War Office he remained contentedly for nearly twenty years. During this long period he had several chances of advancement; the Secretaryship for Ireland was offered him in 1812, and after Lord Liverpool became Prime Minister he was twice offered the Governor-Generalship of India, and at another time the Post Office and an English peerage. The simple explanation of this disinclination to move was that, though fond of official life and extremely reluctant to quit it, he had very little personal ambition at any period of his career, and probably none at its commencement. In a letter about Lord Palmerston's character, which Lord Shaftesbury wrote at the request of his biographer, Mr. Evelyn Ashley, it is stated that as late as 1826, "he passed for a handy clever man who moved his estimates very well, appeared to care but little for public affairs in general, went a good deal into society, and never attracted any other remark but one of wonder, which I often heard, that he had been so long in the same office." He was, in short, content to do carefully

and thoroughly what lay before him, but made no attempt to get out of the groove. Mr. E. Herries in his *Memoir of the Right Hon. J. C. Herries*, accuses Palmerston of "dilatoriness and laxity" at the War Office. But he adduces very feeble evidence to support the charge, and the statement is quite the reverse of what may be gathered from other quarters.

I continue to like this office very much [he writes to Lord Malmesbury in 1809]. There is a good deal to be done, but, if one is confined, there is some satisfaction to have some real business to do; and if they leave us in long enough, I trust much may be accomplished in arranging the interior details of the office, so as to place it on a respectable footing. Its inadequacy to get through the current business that comes before it is really a disgrace to the country, and the arrear of regimental accounts unsettled is of a magnitude not to be conceived. We are now working at the Treasury to induce them to agree to a plan, proposed originally by Sir James Pulteney, and reconsidered by Granville Levison, by which, I think, we shall provide for the current business, and the arrear must be got rid of as well as we can contrive to do it.

This is not the letter of a lax official, and his annual speeches on the Army Estimates show a great power of grappling with details, both during the period of the war and during the years after the peace, when he had to resist the Whig demands for a reduction of the forces. But on subjects unconnected with his department he was for the most part silent. Brougham, indeed, went so far as to inform him that he seldom troubled the House with his observations on any subject; but the statement, like so many of Brougham's, has to be taken with several grains of salt. Besides moving the Army Estimates, Palmerston is frequently to be found in the pages of Hansard during these years defending flogging in the army, the employment of foreign mercenaries, and so forth; doing sometimes a good deal of not very enviable work, for instance,

when he had to defend the cashiering of the gallant Sir Robert Wilson on account of his conduct at the funeral of Queen Caroline. He was especially happy when answering a pertinacious opponent, for instance, when he informed the habitually inaccurate Joseph Hume that “an ancient sage said that there were two things over which even the immortal gods had no power, namely, past events and arithmetic. The honourable gentleman, however, seemed to have power over both.” But the best monument of Palmerston’s powers at this time is an admirable paper on the historical character and position of the Secretary at War, which he drew up on the occasion of a dispute between the Commander-in-Chief, Sir David Dundas, and himself as to their respective spheres of action. Addressed to the Prince Regent, who, as usual, solved the difficulty by leaving it alone, it set forth with great clearness and evident research, that “it had never belonged to the Commander-in-Chief to issue by his authority orders and regulations respecting the public money,” but that the Secretary at War was the accustomed and proper channel for any signification of the royal pleasure on such subjects.\*

Having accompanied Lord Palmerston to the first stepping-stone of his official career, we may as well pause to consider what manner of man he was. The key to his character is perhaps to be found in the fact that while doing the Governments of Perceval and Liverpool genuine service in the House and at the War Office, he was, in conjunction with Croker and

\* There was at this time a Secretary *at* War who controlled army expenditure, and a Secretary *for* War, who had the direction of military operations. Lord Palmerston was simply the financier of the forces, and had nothing to do with the campaigns in the Peninsula and elsewhere. Thus he was hardly an “organizer of victory,” though his functions were of considerable importance.

Peel, amusing himself and his friends, and probably annoying his foes not a little, by a series of squibs contributed to the *Courier* and other Ministerial papers, which were afterwards republished under the title of *The New Whig Guide*. Some of the parodies of Byron are almost worthy of the *Anti-Jacobin*; but they were probably Croker's, not Palmerston's. However, the poem on "The Choice of a Leader," which may be attributed with confidence to Palmerston, contains some amusing lines, for instance, the following burlesque of a famous speech of Sir James Mackintosh against the annexation of Heligoland:—

But scarcely less vile than the seizure of Poland  
 Has been their base conduct to poor Heligoland ;  
 That innocent isle we have stolen from the Danes,  
 And it groans with the weight of our trade and our chains.  
 On that happy strand, not two lustres ago,  
 The thistle was free with luxuriance to grow ;  
 The people at liberty starved, and enjoyed  
 Their natural freedom, by riches uncloy'd.  
 But now all this primitive virtue is fled ;  
 Rum, sugar, tobacco, are come in its stead.  
 And debauch'd by our profligate commerce, we see  
 This much-injured race drinking porter and tea,  
 And damning, half-fuddled (I tell it in pain),  
 Their true and legitimate master—the Dane !

Their connection with the *New Whig Guide* was subsequently the cause of a very animated passage of arms between Croker and Palmerston.

Though the light and jaunty manner of the author of "The Choice of a Leader," was considerably against him among serious politicians, he could hardly fail to be popular in society. "Cupid," as he was called, was a great dandy, frequenting chiefly the company of the Whigs, notably of Sheridan, at whose table he was present on the famous occasion when the bailiffs acted

as waiters. Palmerston's account of the dinner, as chronicled by Mr. Hayward, was that " Sheridan, Canning, Frere, and others, including myself, had agreed to form a society (projected, you may remember, by Swift) for the improvement of the English language. We were to give dinners in turn ; Sheridan gave the first, and my attention was attracted by the frequent appeals of the improvised servants to ' Mr. Sheridan.' ' And did you improve the language ? ' ' Not, certainly, at that dinner ; for Sheridan got drunk, and a good many words of doubtful propriety were employed.' " It was probably from the recollection of old acquaintance, though the two men did not frequent the same circles, that Palmerston, when Foreign Secretary, appointed the broken-down Beau Brummel to the British Consulate at Caen. He was admitted to the jealously exclusive circle of Almack's, where, on the introduction of the waltz into England, he might be seen whirling round with Madame de Lieven, the wife of the Russian Ambassador, an intimacy which cooled considerably in after life. Of course he was on the turf, but, though enough to amuse, not enough to ruin ; for he is said seldom to have betted, and throughout his long racing career rarely owned more than three or four horses at a time, and took care that they paid their way.\* In fact, beneath

\* Lord Palmerston's connection with the turf began as far back as 1815, when he ran a filly called Mignonette, at Winchester. He was, as " Nimrod " said, almost exclusively a " provincial sportsman," and the only races of importance which he carried off were the Cesarewitch, with Ilione, in 1840, and the Ascot Stakes with Buckthorn, in 1852. Mainstone was a strong favourite for the Derby of 1860, but failed completely in the race, not without some suspicions of foul play. Baldwin was the only horse of merit owned by Palmerston after the Mainstone fiasco. He was elected an honorary member of the Jockey Club in 1845, and his colours were green jacket and orange cap.

the exterior of a man of pleasure lay very shrewd habits of business. He took a share of a slate mine in North Wales, and, in spite of numerous disappointments and a heavy outlay, the speculation proved in the end satisfactory. So, too, when paying visits to his Irish estates, he writes enthusiastically to his brother about the making of roads, the construction of a harbour, the drainage of bogs and the building of schools. It was probably rather in jest than in earnest that he contemplates finding some evangelical follower of Mr. Simeon at Cambridge, and sending him to win his "Jerusalem spurs by a campaign in the parish of Ahamlish"; but he shows a real desire to improve the condition of his tenantry, particularly by the extirpation of the middlemen, or petty landlords. The property at Broadlands was throughout his life the subject of quite as much solicitude.

I have been busy [he wrote to his brother in 1843] reading books on agriculture and horticulture, and trying to acquire some knowledge on those matters which are now become sciences. If one does not know something of them oneself, one can never hope to get one's estate or garden well managed. I have let all my farms at Broadlands that were out of lease, and tolerably well, in spite of the badness of the times. I had a shocking set of bad tenants, but have got rid of most of them, and brought in people with skill and capital. Our new gardener does pretty well, and understands the theory of his department; but he is a Methodist and goes preaching on Sunday, and I fear he thinks too much of his sermons to be very successful in his garden.

Palmerston also preserved game, and seems to have been fond of shooting. Riding to hounds with the neighbouring packs was another of his relaxations whenever he had leisure for a gallop, which during his later years seldom happened, but exercise on horseback of a more limited character was one of his daily rules, and the personality of his old grey was almost as

familiar to Londoners as his own. "Every other abstinence," was his saying, "will not make up for abstinence from exercise." Always an active man, he was but little of a student, although his knowledge of the chief Latin and English classics was fairly extensive. The quotations from *Virgil* and *Horace*, which are to be found in his speeches and letters, are often extremely happy, and he evidently knew Sheridan's plays pretty nearly by heart. But if his critical taste is to be judged by the pension which he bestowed on the poet Close, it was catholic rather than cultivated; and it is significant that in the whole of his published letters there is only one allusion to current literature, and that is to *Coningsby*. In his later years he was, according to Mr. Hayward, much attracted by the absurd theory that the plays of Shakespeare were really written by Bacon. When the positive testimony of Ben Jonson in the verses prefixed to the edition of 1623 was adduced, he remarked, "Oh, these fellows always stand up for one another." "The argument," says Hayward, "had struck Lord Palmerston by its ingenuity, and he wanted leisure for a searching exposure of its groundlessness. According to the same authority, the game of billiards was Palmerston's favourite amusement indoors, and "fortune favoured him in this as much as in the political game." After three or four flukes he would say, "I think I had better not name my stroke."

Palmerston's interests were wide, though possibly not very deep. Sir Henry Holland, his doctor, found that he took pleasure in hearing of the latest discoveries in the physical sciences, more especially astronomy, chemistry, and mechanics, and that he had a singular facility in comprehending the importance of their

objects and results. But science had to be made attractive for Palmerston; and while Sir Henry Holland amused him, he was bored by Wheatstone. "I watched him," writes Sir Henry Taylor, "as he listened to a somewhat prolonged exposition by Professor Wheatstone of certain new devices he had been busied with for the application of telegraphy. The man of science was slow, the man of the world *seemed* attentive; the man of science was copious, the man of the world let nothing escape him; the man of science unfolded the anticipated results—another and another; the man of the world listened with all his ears, and I was saying to myself, 'His patience is exemplary, but will it last for ever?' when I heard the issue: 'God bless my soul, you don't say so! I must get you to tell that to the Lord Chancellor.' And the man of the world took the man of science to another part of the room, and bounded away like a horse let loose in a pasture."\* Where art was concerned Lord Palmerston was somewhat of a barbarian. When he paid a visit to Berlin, he was pleased with the frescoes of Cornelius, but chiefly because of their size; and when it was hoped that the Treasury would buy the Soulages collection, Sir Henry Cole found him quite dead to the beauties of Italian art. "Once or twice, looking at the majolica, he said to me, 'What is the use of such rubbish to our manufacturers?'"

It is unnecessary to dwell long upon Palmerston's personal character. His was a bright, sunny nature, buoyant and self-reliant; the jaunty gait was an outward sign of the inward disposition. Sir Henry Holland, who attended both Lord Palmerston and Lord Aberdeen, notices, in his interesting *Recollections*,

\* Sir Henry Taylor's *Autobiography*, vol. ii. pp. 218-219.

the singular contrast of their natural temperaments. The inborn vivacity and optimism of the former pervaded his life, both public and private; rescuing him in a great degree from many of those anxieties which press more or less upon every step of a Minister's career. He had a singular power of clear and prompt decision; and was spared that painful recurrence to foregone doubt which torments feebler minds. Lord Aberdeen habitually looked at objects and events through a more gloomy atmosphere. Palmerston, Sir Henry also tells us, had a wonderful power of mastering bodily pain, and would work almost without abatement under a fit of the gout which would have sent other men groaning to their couches. But though he had little consideration for his own infirmities, he was filled with tender solicitude for his friends when they were in sickness or distress. His correspondence with his brother are full of anxious inquiries and affectionate recollections; while a letter of advice to Lord Shaftesbury, who had fallen into pecuniary difficulties through the dishonesty of his steward, which is preserved in Mr. Hodder's life of that great philanthropist, proves Palmerston to have possessed a delicacy and refinement of sympathy with those to whom he was attached, for which the outside world would have been slow to give him credit.

His hearty, jovial conversation and deportment, "the Ha! Ha! style," as an observer in the House of Commons called it, which appears, according to Mr. Kinglake, to have been considered not quite correct by the denizens of the Whig Olympus, also made him extremely popular with servants and peasantry. A pleasant anecdote has been recorded of a visit paid by him in 1863 to an old woman named Peggy Forbes,

who had been a servant at Dugald Stewart's in 1801, and of her production of a box of tools, the property of 'young Maister Henry,' which she had preserved from her affection for him.

His faults, like his virtues, lay rather near the surface; but as the chief of them, flippancy and a certain measure of unscrupulousness, will frequently be exposed in the events of his public life, it is unnecessary to sermonize on them. And as second-hand descriptions of character are flat and unprofitable when the originals are obtainable, it will be enough to add, before quitting the topic, the evidence as to Lord Palmerston's many virtues given by his best friend Lord Shaftesbury, on the occasion of his death. "I lose," wrote Lord Shaftesbury, "a man who, I knew, esteemed and loved me far beyond every other man living. He showed it in every action of his heart, in every expression of his lips, in private and in public, as a man and as a minister. His society was infinitely agreeable to me; and I admired, every day more, his patriotism, his simplicity of purpose, his indefatigable spirit, his unfailing good humour, his kindness of heart, his prompt, tender, and active consideration for others in the midst of his heaviest toils and anxieties." He was a fine specimen of the English gentleman, and of the long list of his illustrious contemporaries had perhaps most in common with Lord Derby, whom he equalled in Parliamentary courage and excelled in tenacity, though he was inferior to him in oratory and classical culture.

Such was Lord Palmerston, the man, throughout his life, and such was Lord Palmerston the statesman, down to the year 1827, when the illness of the Premier dissolved the Liverpool ministry. He stood, as Lord

Dalling points out, almost alone, belonging to none of the particular sections into which the House of Commons was divided ; indeed, throughout his career he was a parliamentary Ishmaelite, and his intimate friends were almost exclusively non-political. On most subjects, particularly on the question of Catholic Emancipation,\* he was in sympathy with Canning, and afterwards accepted with pride the title of Canningite; but he had little personal connection with that statesman, and did not follow him out of office. His contempt for the Eldonite section of the party, "the stupid old Tory party, who bawl out the memory and praises of Mr. Pitt, while they are opposing all the measures and principles which he held most important," was infinite. The Chancellor was to him—in his correspondence—an "old woman," Liverpool a "spooney," Westmoreland an "ignoramus," Bathurst a "stumped-up old Tory." Some of them repaid him in kind. About eight months before the dissolution of 1826, he found that he was to be opposed at Cambridge, where he had been returned since 1811, by two of his own colleagues, Copley (afterwards Lord Lyndhurst), the Attorney-General, and Goulburn, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, both, of course, anti-Catholics. A most laborious canvas was thereby entailed, during which Palmerston had to contend with all the influence that Lord Eldon, Bathurst, and the Duke of York could bring to bear upon him. In the end he triumphed, for though Copley headed the poll, Palmerston beat Goulburn by 192. "This," he

\* "The day is fast approaching," he wrote to his brother in 1826, "as it seems to me, when this matter will be settled as it must be." He had constantly voted for Catholic Emancipation from 1812 onwards and in 1813 made a clever speech on the subject, basing his support of the measure on grounds, not of right, but of political expediency.

writes in his autobiography, “was the first decided step towards a breach between me and the Tories, and they were the aggressors.”

Several incidents of importance, more or less intimately connected with his business at the War Office, mark this period of Palmerston’s life. In 1815 and 1818, he visited France and recorded his observations in journals, of which extracts have since been published. Written when the memories of great events were fresh in the minds of those with whom he came in contact, they are full of interest, and the Secretary at War’s own remarks are well worth perusal. His estimate of the relative merits of the allied armies is striking :—

Our men certainly do not look so smart and uniform in a body as the Prussians and Russians, but still they have a more soldier-like air; they look more like business and fighting. The foreign troops look like figures cut out of card, ours like a collection of living men; the former move like machines, ours without any irregularity or break, yet bear the appearance of individual vigour. Their men seem to depend entirely on each other, ours look as if they moved independently, and yet with equal uniformity, as a mass. In short, one marks a character of individual energy about our people which one does not see in theirs.

A still more critical event occurred to Lord Palmerston in the spring of the year in which he paid his second visit to France. On the 8th of April, as he was ascending the stairs at the War Office, he was shot at by Lieutenant Davies, of the 62nd Regiment. Davies had written two letters to the Secretary at War, requesting an interview; but they were so evidently the work of a madman, that the request was refused. A slight wound on the back was the only result, and the man, who was defended on his trial at Lord Palmerston’s expense, was consigned to Bedlam.

When, on the retirement of Lord Liverpool in 1827,

Mr. Canning was entrusted by George IV. with the formation of a Government, Palmerston was naturally one of the men whose co-operation he would be the first to select. A fusion of Canningites and Whigs was inevitable, owing to the refusal of the Eldonite faction to take part in the Ministry ; and the Secretary at War's easy temper and moderate views clearly qualified him to play a prominent part in a coalition ministry. It was but natural that he should be offered the seat in the Cabinet and office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, which he had refused years before, and it was but natural that he should accept the offer. Unfortunately other ministerial arrangements had necessitated a contest at Cambridge ; so it was decided, on the advice of Croker, that Palmerston, while immediately advanced to Cabinet rank, should remain at the War Office until the end of the session, when, the other contests having been decided, he would be returned unopposed on the acceptance of office. About the middle of the session, however, Canning sent for Palmerston, and told him, with considerable embarrassment, that he found that it was more convenient that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should also be First Lord, and that both offices should be united in the person of the Prime Minister, the result being, he said, that he was unable to carry out the intended arrangement. Though he suspected that Canning was being made the cat's-paw of the king, who " personally hated him " and wanted Mr. Herries to take the Exchequer,\* Palmerston good-humouredly replied that he was perfectly content to remain where he was ; and he even went out of his way to make the Prime Minister's mind easy, by pointing out that as the

\* Palmerston was mistaken as far as Herries was concerned. See the elaborate vindication of Herries in the memoir by his son.

Secretary of War was at present administering the discipline and patronage of the army, the office of Commander-in-Chief being vacant through the death of the Duke of York, he might well rest satisfied with his position. In the same pleasant way he brushed aside two attempts to get rid of him, both of which may fairly be traced to the hostility of George IV. When offered the Governorship of Jamaica, he roared with laughter in Canning's face ; and to a third proposal that he should become Governor-General of India, he replied that he had no family to provide for, and that his health would not stand the climate.

The untimely death of Canning was followed by the ludicrous efforts of " Goody " Goderich to form and keep together an administration, which terminated, as the world knows, by the Premier bursting into tears in the royal closet, and the King lending him a handkerchief to wipe them away. Palmerston was once more offered the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and once more asked to release the Premier from the offer, as the King wished for Herries, though the latter had already declined the post on the ground of ill-health. Again Palmerston gave up his claims with easy good humour, though Huskisson, now generally recognised as the leader of the Canningites, told him that he should have pressed them home. With the cat-and-dog existence of the Ministry he seems to have troubled himself very little ; foreseeing, in all probability, that its life would be brief.

On the resignation of Goderich, the Duke of Wellington undertook to carry on affairs, and at once opened negotiations with Huskisson, as the head of the Canning party. Though Palmerston had only a few months before, in a letter to his brother, pronounced against

the formation of a “Government like Liverpool’s, consisting of men differing on all great questions, and perpetually on the verge of a quarrel,” the little band agreed that they would accept office—not as individuals, but as the friends of Mr. Canning. Lord Dudley was to carry out the principles of the departed statesman in Foreign Affairs; Huskisson and Charles Grant (Lord Glenelg) in Colonial and commercial matters; Lamb (Lord Melbourne), as Chief Secretary, would secure toleration for the Irish Catholics; Palmerston kept his old post. The natural results followed; grave divergences of opinion manifested themselves on every subject of importance, and the Cabinet usually separated without coming to a decision. Abroad, the chief difficulty that pressed for solution was the revolution in Greece, which had been brought to a crisis through the destruction of the Turkish fleet by Admiral Codrington at the battle of Navarino. That independence in some shape or form must be granted to the Greeks by the Powers was now inevitable; but while the collective voice of the Cabinet pronounced the battle to be “an untoward event,” and while the Tory section were in favour of cutting down the territory and liberties of the new nation to the narrowest possible limits, from fear of its becoming a pawn in the hands of Russia; the Canningites were disposed to let things take their course, and to restore to Greece the sacred places where lingered the memories of her immortal past. As Palmerston afterwards pointed out, a Greece was an absurdity which contained “neither Athens, nor Thebes, nor Marathon, nor Salamis, nor Platæa, nor Thermopylæ, nor Missalonghi.” When he proposed that an effort should be made to redeem the Greek women and children who had been carried into slavery at Alexandria, “the Duke received the proposi-

tion coldly; Aberdeen treated the matter as a thing we had no right to interfere with; Bathurst, as the exercise of a legitimate right on the part of the Turks; and Ellenborough, as rather a laudable action." On home affairs the same difference of views cropped up at every turn. A dispute between the rival factions of the Cabinet on the duty to be imposed on corn, produced the temporary resignation of Charles Grant; and, finally, in May 1828, after five months' tenure of office, the Canningites retired in a body on the trivial question of the disfranchisement of the corrupt borough of East Retford. In the division on the Bill, Huskisson, who considered himself bound by previous pledges, voted against the Government; Palmerston and Lamb followed his example. They were in the minority; and, considering the difficulties with which the Duke was surrounded on all sides, it is improbable that he would have taken any notice of their conduct. Huskisson, however, sent him a foolish letter of resignation, and Wellington, weary of perpetual broils, and disliking the bourgeois assurance of the chief of the Canningites, determined to pin him to his word. In vain the other Canningites attempted mediation: "It is no mistake," said the Duke; "it can be no mistake, and shall be no mistake." Thereupon they held counsel together and decided, Lord Dudley being sorely unwilling, that, as they had entered the Cabinet in a body, they must retire in a body. Palmerston accordingly shook the dust of "pig-tail Toryism," as he styles it in one of his letters, from his feet, and Sir Henry Hardinge reigned at the War Office in his stead.

In opposition he found his opportunity. Hitherto the trammels of office and want of ambition had caused him to remain placidly among the second rank of poli-

ticians ; now he was unmuzzled, and had tried his strength in a succession of cabinets. His correspondence throughout the years immediately preceding his retirement shows how great was his interest in continental affairs, and it was to the Greek war of liberation, and to the usurpation of Dom Miguel in Portugal that he turned for the main sources of his inspiration rather than to startling series of events which began with the return of O'Connell for Clare, and concluded with the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act ; though he spoke on the measure, and prophesied—though, as the event proved, falsely—that it “would open a career of happiness to Ireland which for centuries she had been forbidden to taste.” In 1822 Croker had considered him deficient in that flow of ideas and language which can run on for a couple of hours without, on the one hand, committing the Government, or, on the other, lowering by commonplaces or inanities the station of Cabinet minister.\* But in 1829 Greville called a speech of his “the event of the week,” and observed that he had at last “launched forth, and with astonishing success.” In fact, Palmerston set the seal to his fame as an orator by the speech which was made on the 1st of June, and which dealt with the relations between England and the nations of Europe. The display was nominally made in support of a motion of Sir James Mackintosh on the affairs of Portugal, but through the indulgence of the House, Palmerston was allowed to descent on foreign affairs generally.

The burden of this elaborate indictment is to be found in the statement that England, lately the friend of liberty and civilization, was now the key-stone of

\* Letter from Croker to Peel, *Croker Papers*, vol. i. p. 213.

that Absolutist arch of which Miguel, the Portuguese usurper, and Spain, and Austria, and the Sultan Mahmoud were the component parts. He complained that Greece had been treated with scanty generosity ; that with regard to the conflict between Russia and Turkey, the Wellington ministry had not made *bonâ fide* efforts to bring about peace, and so to prevent the conflagration from spreading over Europe, by “ setting their faces on the one hand against territorial acquisition by Russia, and, on the other hand, by resisting stoutly and firmly the intrigues of other powers to stimulate the obstinacy of Turkey.” Three-fourths of the speech dealt with the condition of affairs in Portugal, and the speaker undoubtedly made out a very strong case for censure. The Government had professed to act on the principle of non-interference ; in reality, they had interfered constantly, “ only on the wrong side.” In a sketch of the relations which had prevailed of late years between England and Portugal, Palmerston pointed out that it was on English advice that Dom Pedro, the Emperor of Brazil, had acted when he abdicated his rights to the throne of Portugal in favour of his little daughter, Donna Maria. The conditions of that abdication had been the marriage of the young queen, when she was of age, with her uncle, Dom Miguel, who swore at Vienna, in the presence of the British Ambassador, to maintain as Regent the laws of Portugal and the institutions granted by Dom Pedro. Having taken these vows with the intention of breaking them, Miguel paid a visit to the English court on his way to Lisbon, and so “ the King of England had been made a stalking-horse under whose cover this royal poacher had crept on his unsuspecting prey.” Miguel had marched to his palace surrounded by British troops, and so encouraged the

constitutional party to make no secret of their aims and aspirations ; but when he had broken his oath, dissolved the constitutional chambers, and proclaimed himself king, the contingent of British troops, after playing a ~~acitly~~ acquiescent part, had been withdrawn from Lisbon. During the reign of terror which followed, under which no less than five British subjects had been imprisoned without trial, the English Government had indeed remonstrated, but without the slightest result ; “ Buonaparte, in the plenitude and insolence of his power, never treated the humble representative of a petty German principality with more contemptuous disregard than that which our remonstrances had met with at the hands of Dom Miguel.” If Dom Miguel had been treated as “ a spoiled and favourite child,” great harshness had, on the other hand, been employed by the Wellington administration towards the Loyalist party. When Miguel had declared their stronghold, Oporto, to be in a state of blockade, the British Government had hastened to acknowledge the blockade. When the Loyalist refugees in England had demanded to be allowed to go to the assistance of Terceira in the Azores, which still held out for Donna Maria, permission had been refused on the ground that they could not be allowed to sail from a British port ; and when they had fitted out an expedition in defiance of the Duke’s command, they had been stopped by a British vessel, “ the blood of unarmed and defenceless men was shed in the only harbour of their sovereign, and under the shadow of her flag ; and the navy of England, heretofore accounted the protector and the avenger of the injured, was made the subservient tool of injury and oppression.”

This speech is perhaps as characteristic an example as there exists of Palmerston’s earlier oratory. On

the whole, it must be pronounced decidedly second-rate when compared with the great masterpieces of British forensic art. The reader searches in vain for the concentrated brilliancy of phrase which has given immortality to the utterances of Chatham. The *purpurei panni* are there, and on occasion passages of the most arrant clap-trap—for instance, when the kissing of little Donna Maria by George IV., on the occasion of her visit to England, is termed “a recognition in which the inborn nobleness of royal nature contrived to infuse into the dry forms of State ceremonial something almost partaking of the charm and the spirit of chivalrous protection.” Still less should the reader expect to find any of those profound deductions, drawn from the knowledge of mankind and the headsprings of philosophy, which are features of the style of Burke. He is favoured instead with the following reminiscence of Dugald Stewart’s pupil-room:—“There is in nature no moving power but mind, and all else is passive and inert; in human affairs this power is opinion, in political affairs it is public opinion; and he who can grasp the power, with it will subdue the fleshly arm of physical strength, and compel it to work out its purpose.” In short, the speech seldom rises above the commonplace, either in thought or in language; an elaborate metaphor resolves itself on examination into our old friends the great ship and the “puny insect” at the helm.

Still, with certain deductions, the speech must be pronounced a performance of genuine and peculiar merit. It is evidently, like all of the more elaborate of Palmerston’s earlier efforts, the result of very careful preparation, and, taken as a whole, it contains a well-arranged and complete statement of the grounds of righteous indignation entertained by the people at large

against the Wellington administration. Throughout his life, Lord Palmerston's main strength lay in his exposition of a case, whether for the prosecution or the defence; and this strength is exhibited even more markedly in his despatches than in his set speeches. It is, as Greville acutely remarks, "when he takes his pen in his hand that his intellect seems to have full play"; but in his speeches, though in a less degree, is to be seen an instinctive skill in putting points in their most telling manner, in gliding over awkward admissions, and in gauging the intellect and disposition of his audience, whom he was in the habit of tickling with jokes and local allusions. Spoken entirely for the moment, they have not much permanent value, in themselves and considered apart from their results; and Palmerston's oratory, like that of all statesmen who aim chiefly at being "Parliamentary hands," was in its day over-estimated, and afterwards consigned to a somewhat too complete oblivion. For in spite of much fustian and not a little insincerity, his are the speeches of a gentleman; of a brave man, who knew exactly what his aim was, and how it was to be accomplished; of one who, except when led astray by personal prejudices, had really large views on political morality, and who firmly believed that it was England's mission to help the oppressed of the earth, and that she was thoroughly able to execute that mission.

Though Wellington can hardly have been grateful to Palmerston for constituting himself censor-in-chief of the Tory foreign policy, he made several overtures of reconciliation to the ex-Secretary at War during the last days of his career as Premier. The first was through Melbourne, who, however, declined to join without Huskisson and Grey. The second, made after

the death of Huskisson, was through Lord Clive; but Palmerston insisted on the admission of Grey and Lansdowne to office as a *sine quâ non*, proving thereby how closely he was now linked with the Whigs. The third, made through Croker, was brought to a dramatic conclusion. "Well," said Croker, "I will bring the matter to a point. Are you resolved, or are you not, to vote for Parliamentary Reform?" Palmerston said, "I am." "Well, then," said Croker, "there is no use in talking to you any more on the subject." The Canningites were irresistibly compelled, as were the Peelites after them, to throw in their lot with Liberalism.

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## CHAPTER II.

## BELGIAN INDEPENDENCE.

1830-1833.

Palmerston and home politics—At the Foreign Office—Activity of his policy—Its general features—Objections to it—The Belgian Revolution—Meeting of the London Conference—The Eighteen Articles—Possibility of a war with France—Leopold of Saxe-Coburg becomes King of the Belgians—Modification of the Eighteen Articles—The Dutch declare war and the French enter Belgium—Firmness of Lord Palmerston—The Twenty-four Articles—Anglo-French expedition—Feeling in England—Stability of Belgium.

IN the Ministry of Lord Grey, Palmerston held the post of Foreign Secretary, for which he had been marked out by his exploits and knowledge, and he continued to hold that appointment, except during Peel's "hundred days" in 1834 and 1835, and his still shorter tenure of office in 1839, until the downfall of the Whigs in 1841. During this long period he occupied himself very little with home affairs, and maintained a serene satisfaction with their conduct even under Lord Althorp's management of the House of Commons. He spoke, indeed, on the Reform Bill, replying very effectively to those who taunted him with deserting the principles of Mr. Canning, that the "gigantic mind" of the departed statesman "was not to be pinned down by the Lilliputian threads of verbal quotation," and that

the best key to Canning's opinions was to be found in his saying that "they who resist improvement because it is innovation, may find themselves compelled to accept innovation when it has ceased to be improvement." He also, while strongly in favour of a large creation of peers in the last resource, took a creditable part in negotiating the interchange of views which caused the Waverers to desert the Tory majority in the House of Lords, and thereby rendered possible the passing of the Bill. But for the most part he was silent on internal topics; and as the nation knew little, and cared less, about Belgium and Portugal, Palmerston's name, though renowned on the Continent, was held in light regard in England. Hence it is hardly surprising that in 1831 he should have been beaten at Cambridge for advocating Parliamentary Reform, and in 1835 should have been turned out of his seat for South Hants. It was thought that Lord Melbourne would send him to the Paris Embassy; but after a few weeks he found refuge at Tiverton, which borough remained faithful to him for the remainder of his life.

At the Foreign Office he reigned supreme; though his absolutism was less marked under Lord Grey than under Lord Melbourne, under whose loose and hap-hazard *régime* the strong-willed Foreign Secretary soon acquired practical independence, and brushed aside with jaunty nonchalance the remonstrances addressed to him by the more energetic of his colleagues, particularly Lord Holland and Lord Clarendon. Under his auspices England entered upon a period of diplomatic activity which for its extent, duration, and success, has but few parallels in our history. It must be acknowledged that Palmerston had peculiar opportunities. During his first years in office the flood of revolution, having burst its

boundaries at Paris, was sweeping over the face of Europe and shaking the great monarchies to their foundations. Hence, with insurrection menacing them at home, they had but little leisure or inclination for a forward policy abroad ; and the English Foreign Secretary had a comparatively unobstructed course before him. Still there were times when his position was extremely critical, and it was chiefly through sheer pluck and address, aided perhaps by a considerable share of good fortune, that he rode over difficulties which would have overwhelmed a warier man. Greville has recorded the admirable dictum of Lord Granville, that contempt for clamour and abuse was one of the finest of his characteristics, and it was one that never failed him.

He was undoubtedly well served, particularly by Lord Beauvau at Vienna—less well by Lord Ponsonby at the Porte—and certainly deserved the steady co-operation of his subordinates. His chief faults in dealing with people arose from an inability to see that they might possibly be right if they differed from him in opinion ; and in a want of consideration, which was markedly exhibited in his unpunctual habits. Hence he occasionally annoyed those who came in immediate contact with him either at the Foreign Office or in the Corps Diplomatique. But the representatives of England at foreign courts knew that in the Foreign Secretary they had a friend who would not stint his praise when it was due, and who would not withdraw his protection from them if they were visited by unjust suspicions or royal caprice. He once answered Mr. Cobden as follows :—

The hon. gentleman says that all the difficulties which have come upon this country in various parts of the world have been due to my meddling policy, and to my habit of supporting those who act under

me. Again I confess to the charge preferred against me. I do think that those who employ officers in distant parts of the globe are bound to support and defend them, as long as they believe that they have done their best according to their sense of duty, and have not acted in a manner deserving of just blame. That has been my practice as far as I have had to deal with such matters ; and, therefore, I am rather proud to have this testimony from the hon. member that our agents in remote parts of the world act in the confidence that they will be borne out and supported by the Government at home.

On the other hand, they were sometimes apt to hector foreign courts, and to become more Palmerstonian than Palmerston himself. There was, in fact, a good deal of unnecessary friction connected with our relations with the Great Powers during this period, for which the Foreign Secretary was partly to blame. Though an indefatigable worker, to the extent of denying himself all social pleasures during the Session of Parliament, he seems to have been somewhat deficient in method. Important despatches remained unanswered for weeks, much to the annoyance of foreign statesmen; in his anxiety to prove himself in the right, he sometimes overstated his case and made reconciliation difficult. He was also indiscreet, and some of the private letters accompanying his despatches are written in a very slapdash and inconsiderate manner. Lord Beauvale, it is said, seldom paid any attention to them, but acted solely on his public instructions. A most characteristic instance of his gratuitous flippancy is preserved in the memoirs of Metternich. In 1834, when William IV. dismissed Lord Melbourne's first Ministry, the Foreign Secretary sent a brief notice of the change of Ministry to the Viennese embassy, with the following P.S. :—“ Take this note, without loss of time, to Prince Metternich. I am certain that he will never have been more delighted in his life than when he reads it, and that I shall never

have been so popular with him as on my departure from office." No wonder that the Austrian Minister was of opinion that the English Foreign Secretary's character was "hateful and inexplicable."

But his genial presence as a rule disarmed resentment, and if he was unpopular with the continental courts, he was personally esteemed by the Corps Diplomatique. They all bore witness to his high character as a man; and of his general qualifications for the management of foreign affairs, a most favourable estimate is to be found even in the memoirs of Count Beust, who had no occasion to love him. The creator of the Dual Monarchy says that "by his easy and attractive, yet very dignified manners, by his knowledge of foreign countries and languages, by his keen sympathy with the national currents which influence the intercourse of England with other Powers, Palmerston was the very ideal of a Foreign Minister."

As might be expected, Lord Palmerston had no cut-and-dried system of policy. Of course, he had far too much common sense not to be throughout his life a firm believer in the doctrine of balance of power. As he remarked in the last great speech which he ever delivered on foreign affairs—

We are told that the balance of power is an exploded doctrine belonging to ancient times. Why, it is a doctrine founded on the nature of man. It means that it is to the interest of the community of nations that no one section should acquire such a preponderance as to endanger the security of the rest; and it is for the advantage of all that the smaller Powers should be respected in their independence, and not swallowed up by their more powerful neighbours.

And at the outset of his career, to maintain the balance he saw, indeed, the value of the *entente cordiale* with Orleanist France, and would have liked, if possible, to

make it the basis of an alliance including constitutionally-governed Portugal and Spain, and directed against the Absolutist Powers, Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Baron Stockmar was quite right when he wrote that a fundamental principle of Lord Palmerston's policy was never to employ England's political influence in foreign countries for the oppression of the governed by the Government.\* Still British interests were with him supreme, and the moment they clashed with the French course of action he threw Louis Philippe and his ministers overboard without the smallest scruple, and entered into new combinations. The firm was to be England and France, not France and England. Perhaps the best description of the Palmerstonian ideal of foreign policy is to be found in a speech which he made in 1848, in answer to one of Mr. Urquhart's attacks :—

As long as [England] sympathises with right and justice, she will never find herself alone. She is sure to find some other State of sufficient power, influence, and weight to support and aid her in the course she may think fit to pursue. Therefore, I say that it is a narrow policy to suppose that this country or that is marked out as the eternal ally or the perpetual enemy of England. We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow. And if I might be allowed to express in one sentence the principle which I think ought to guide an English minister, I would adopt the expression of Canning, and say that with every British minister the interests of England ought to be the shibboleth of policy.

In other words, while ardently sympathising with constitutionalism—or, as Prince Metternich called it, the revolutionary principle,—he allowed for the working of chance in human affairs, and cared little for consistency in comparison with success, for means in com-

\* Stockmar's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 364 (English translation).

parison with ends. That may not be the highest ideal of statesmanship, but is the only statesmanship which has accomplished great things for nations. By it Cavour freed Italy, and Bismarck united Germany. All such men are necessarily Opportunists, as it is now the fashion to call the type; they claim to be judged only by results, by poising the gains against the losses. It would probably be extremely difficult to make out from Lord Palmerston's despatches and public utterances any more definite system of action than an inflexible determination that his country should get the better of whatever struggle she might happen to have encountered or provoked. He loved her ardently, and believed in his fellow Englishmen as firmly as his fellow Englishmen believed in him. To serve what he honestly believed to be their interests, he was at one time an ally of France, at another of Russia; he abetted the revolution in Italy, he discouraged it in Hungary. The truth would appear to be that rigid systems are incompatible with creative Foreign Statesmanship, which has to build with whatever materials it may find to hand; it is not by systems that a working alliance between Russia and the Porte can be kept together, as Lord Palmerston kept it together in 1840. They can be adopted by financiers, by reformers of national codes, but not by diplomatists, who frequently have to act under conditions in which unknown plays the major part, and when they have to trust entirely to the impulse of the moment. Metternich is a good example of a Foreign Minister who set a fixed course of action before him; he outlived the time when pure Conservatism was a benefit to Europe, and was doomed to see his own intellectual bankruptcy, and the almost complete overthrow of his country under the stress of

reaction. Against him stood Palmerston—except during the truce between them created by the Syrian question—in the double capacity of the representative of the greatest of the constitutional Powers and of a man personally disposed to anticipate revolution by reform. The contest between the two men was one of principle, and never extended to the battle-field; but it was none the less acute. It terminated, as far as Metternich was concerned, with the revolution of 1848; but he left to his successors in the direction of Austrian and German politics a legacy of somewhat unreasonable Anglophobia, which pursued Lord Palmerston to the end of his life, and was doubtless in part the cause of his failure to bring the Schleswig-Holstein question to a successful issue. But on the whole Lord Palmerston may be considered to have triumphed completely over his great rival for the leadership of European politics; though less perhaps in the creation of independent Belgium, than in the constitutionalizing of Spain and Portugal, for to the first the Austrian Chancellor entertained no deep-rooted objection.

Lord Palmerston's foreign policy found its best expression, from the humanitarian point of view, in his efforts to suppress the slave trade; and from the practical, in the numerous commercial treaties concluded while he was Foreign Secretary. The chief objections to it were, as the statesmen of the Cobden school pointed out with vigorous logic during the later part of his career, that by continually keeping England on the brink of war, it necessitated huge armaments and a heavy burden of taxation. To which Palmerston would have replied that war was more likely to be avoided by a bold than by a timid policy, and that large armaments were a necessity in any case, considering

that British interests were world-wide, and the huge Empire extremely vulnerable. On the latter point he once pointed out, in a remarkable letter to Mr. Gladstone, that—

We have on the other side of the Channel a people who, say what they may, hate us as a nation from the bottom of their hearts, and would make any sacrifice to inflict a deep humiliation on England. It is natural that this should be. They are eminently vain, and their passion is glory in war. They cannot forget or forgive Aboukir, Trafalgar, the Peninsula, Waterloo, and St. Helena. . . . Give [the rulers of France] a cause of quarrel, which any foreign Power may at any time invent or create, if so minded: give him the command of the Channel, which personal or accidental naval superiority might afford him, and then calculate if you can—for it would pass my reckoning power to do so—the disastrous consequences to the British nation which a landing of an army of from one to two hundred thousand men would bring with it. Surely even a large yearly expenditure for army and navy is an economical insurance against such a catastrophe.

The passage was written under somewhat abnormal circumstances, when France was “spoiling for a fight,” as the Irish say, and it seemed to be quite uncertain with which of her neighbours she proposed to pick a quarrel. But it is capable of general application as well; and, *mutatis mutandis*, embodies Lord Palmerston’s views of the true attitude to be adopted towards Russia, the other Power with whom England is inevitably at variance in nine European crises out of ten, and whose inevitable advance towards the frontier of India he foretold as far back as 1847.

Even those who object to his policy on the ground of its expensiveness, must be willing to acknowledge its honesty and success. He, quite as much as Prince Bismarck, was a believer in the principle of *do ut des*, and he had little confidence in sentiment as a permanent bond of union between nation and nation. Les peuples n’ont

*pas des cousins*, was one of his favourite maxims ; he held that hope and fear were the mainsprings of diplomatic action, not a Utopian belief in the perfectibility of the species, that arguments of the prophet and the divine were out of place in despatches addressed to Metternich or Nesselrode. As to its success, it is enough to remark, without discussing "might-have-beens," that as long as Lord Palmerston directed foreign affairs, either as Foreign Secretary or Prime Minister, England avoided war, and played a prominent and creditable part in nearly every crisis. There was something in that, whatever the Cobdenites might say.

In his latter days Lord Palmerston was accustomed to say that of all his achievements, the one of which he was most proud, was his treaty with Brazil for the suppression of the slave-trade. But the suppression of Brazilian slavery must have come sooner or later, and it is to independent Belgium that we must look for the most conspicuous and artistic monument of his diplomatic genius. The revolt of Belgium from Holland, which had taken place during the last days of the Wellington ministry, was obviously completely destructive of one of the most carefully planned of the arrangements of 1815. It was the object of the statesmen assembled at Vienna, as it had been the object of Mr. Pitt before them, to create a strong monarchy on the northern frontier of France, as a barrier to French aggression. Belgium and Holland were therefore united under the sovereignty of the House of Orange, and an impregnable line of fortresses was constructed along the southern frontier of the kingdom of the Netherlands, at the cost of the Allies, and under the superintendence of Wellington. Unfortunately the union proved one of hands, not of hearts. The Belgians

found themselves deprived of their just share of office and representation, and saddled with more than their fair share of debt ; they were compelled to use the Dutch language in their courts of law, and were forced to submit to the systematic appointment of Protestant teachers in their seminaries. Always full of sympathy for French ideas, they naturally found in the July Revolution of 1830, an example that must be followed immediately and at all hazards. On the 28th of August, Brussels, inspired by the patriotic strains of Massaniello, rose in revolt, and the example of the capital was speedily followed by the provinces.

Fortunately for Belgium, the autocratic Powers were too busily employed in making head against the Revolution at home to be able to send troops to the assistance of the Dutch Government. The creators of the revolution seem, indeed, to have chosen the moment for action with extraordinary skill, for so weak were the northern Powers, that we find Lord Palmerston writing to Lord Granville that they would have great difficulty in bringing into the field a force at all adequate to make an attack on France ; a statement which is of some importance in forming an estimate of the wisdom of the policy of balancing Western constitutionalism against Northern autocracy. Lord Aberdeen, though he disapproved of the revolution, bore too much good sense to give an affirmative answer to the appeal of the King of the Netherlands. Instead, he hurried on the meeting of the Conference, which had been summoned to London at the instance of the King, and the representatives of the Powers promptly concluded an armistice between the belligerents. It was at this stage of the negotiations that Palmerston replaced Aberdeen at the Foreign Office, and began his great career as Foreign Minister of

England. The independence of Belgium, which hung doubtfully in the balance while Lord Aberdeen was at the Foreign Office, was now, in some form or other, assured.

Though breathing-time had been gained, the situation was evidently full of difficulty. There was a strong war party in the French Chambers, anxious to send armed assistance to their Belgian neighbours, and looking for their reward in the destruction of the barrier fortresses, and a considerable rectification of the French frontier, if not in the absolute annexation of Belgium to France. There was also a possibility that Louis Philippe, wishing to secure popularity for his new dynasty, would play into the hands of that party, even at the risk of war with England. Fortunately, however, the King of the French had too much common-sense, and Talleyrand, his minister at London, held so firmly to the view that a good understanding with England was a vital necessity for the Orleanist monarchy, that he was ready to disobey his instructions rather than cause a serious rupture. With moderation in the ascendant on the French side, Palmerston had little difficulty in gaining the consent of the Conference to a principle of separation under which the Powers declared that Belgium should form a perpetually neutral state, and guaranteed its integrity and inviolability. This important declaration was accompanied by another, that the Powers in these arrangements would seek no augmentation of territory. It was not without considerable difficulty that the English minister succeeded in obtaining Talleyrand's consent to the latter stipulation. The Duchy of Luxemburg had taken part in the rebellion against the King of Holland, but, though he was its ruler, it belonged not to Holland but to the German Confederation. Palmerston's idea

was that if the King of Holland would cede Luxemburg to Belgium, the Belgians might consent to place his eldest son, the Prince of Orange, on their throne. Talleyrand's solution of the difficulty was that Luxemburg should be handed over to France, as the French frontier was very weak on that side ; and if this were impossible, that France should at least receive the towns of Marienburg and Philippeville. Palmerston thereupon gave him a lecture on the impossibility of a continuation of the *entente cordiale* if France intended to aim at territorial acquisitions ; and by the Eighteen Articles, signed by the members of the Conference on January 27th, 1831, it was decided that Luxemburg should remain part of the German Confederation. These articles, which assigned to Holland the limits which she possessed in 1790, were accepted by the Dutch Plenipotentiaries.

The Belgians, however, who had taken the bit between their teeth, declined to accept the Eighteen Articles, their chief grievance being that they were assigned an excessive share of the divided debt of the kingdom of the Netherlands. They proceeded further to assert their independence by electing a sovereign, and, with the obvious design of playing off France against the other Powers, they chose for their King the Duc de Nemours, the second son of Louis Philippe. The French King's well-known instincts as *père de famille* were at once brought into full play, and a grave crisis began which extended over several weeks. Nothing could have been firmer than Palmerston's conduct. He informed Talleyrand that the acceptance of the Belgian crown by Nemours, would be looked upon as a union between Belgium and France, and would be made at the risk of war with England ; he persuaded the Conference to sign a self-denying ordinance by which they pledged them-

selves to reject a prince who should be chosen from the reigning families of the five Powers. Louis Philippe gave way for the moment, and informed the Belgian deputation that his regard for the peace of Europe rendered it imperative for him to decline the proffered honour; but the Parisians were wildly excited, the French Government began military preparations on a large scale, and Count Sebastiani, the Foreign Secretary, let fall a remark about France being the dupe of England, which nearly set Europe ablaze.

It was unlikely that Lord Palmerston would put up with language of the sort. "Pray take care," he wrote to Lord Granville, our Minister at Paris, "in all your conversation with Sebastiani, to make him understand that our desire for peace will never lead us to submit to an affront either in language or in act"; and in a private letter to Lord Granville, sent through the French Foreign Office,\* where it was opened and read as a matter of course, Sebastiani was informed that "we are not used to be accused of making people dupes."

The resolute language had excellent effect, and the crisis passed off. Sebastiani lowered his tone, Talleyrand was unceasing in his pacific efforts, and a political change in France placed at the head of the French Ministry a resolute friend of peace in the person of Casimir Périer; Sebastiani, however, retaining the post of Foreign Minister. Palmerston was delighted with the altered aspect of affairs, and Périer on his side, after throwing out a hint that France would like the Duchy of Bouillon, directed Talleyrand to accept without qualifications the "bases of separation," as the Eighteen Articles were called. Further, the Belgians

\* According to Lord Dalling, this is a not uncommon method of giving a very strong hint.

were informed that if they refused to accept the bases of separation by the 1st of June the five Powers would at once break off diplomatic relations.

The Belgians failed to accept the bases of separation, and diplomatic relations were suspended. People thought they were mad, but Palmerston observed a good deal of method and calculation in their madness. The probable explanation of their proceedings is that, confident of the support of either England or France, or possibly of both, they saw that everything was to be gained by playing a bold game. The next step taken by them was at any rate greatly to their credit; of the candidates for the crown that were still available they chose the most suitable, Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, the widowed husband of the Princess Charlotte of England, and the Prince who had with remarkable prudence rejected the unstable throne of Greece. He was elected with the understanding that he should marry the daughter of Louis Philippe. The wisdom of their choice of a candidate likely to propitiate both England and France became further evident when Leopold declined to accept the crown until the Belgians had accepted the bases of separation, and thereby forced the Powers to reconsider their ultimatum. Concessions were made; Luxemburg, instead of being definitely assigned to Holland, was to be made the subject of ulterior negotiation; so also was the town of Maestricht; the debt was to be divided into fairer proportions. These resolutions were embodied in a fresh set of eighteen articles, accepted by the Belgian Parliament, and Leopold became King of the Belgians.

The commencement of his reign was not propitious. As Belgium had refused to accept the bases of separation, so did the Dutch reject their modification. The

King of Holland resolved to follow up this determination by a bold stroke ; he declared the armistice to be at an end, and despatched an army of 50,000 men to the frontier. Thereupon began a fresh crisis of considerable acuteness. Without consulting the Allies, Louis Philippe sent a force to the assistance of the Belgians under Marshal Gérard, and it was only by the exercise of the utmost promptitude that Sir Robert Adair, the English ambassador, prevented the outbreak of hostilities which could hardly have failed to resolve themselves eventually into a European war.

Even though the situation was saved for the moment, there appeared for the second time during the negotiations an imminent possibility of war between England and France. Marshal Gérard was in possession, and the French Government declared that he could not possibly be withdrawn without a *quid pro quo*. While Périer was plausibly explaining to Lord Granville that the departure of the French troops would be followed by the overthrow of his ministry, unless some salve was offered to the vanity of his countrymen ; Talleyrand was hinting at the partition of Belgium between France, Prussia, and Holland ; while Sebastiani, braggart to the last, though consenting to withdraw 20,000 men from Belgium, stated that a decision must be taken on the destiny of the frontier fortresses before the French army would entirely evacuate the country. Lord Palmerston's reply was decided in the extreme. He pointed out to Lord Granville that "the only value to England of Périer and his Cabinet was that they were believed to be lovers of peace, and observers of treaties ; but if they were to be merely puppets, put up to play the part cast for them by the violent party, what was it to England whether they stood or fell ?" To Sebastiani it was

explained that the French pretensions with regard to the fortresses were utterly inadmissible. They had been built by the Allies at a great cost and as a barrier against French aggression, and it was therefore impossible to make France a party to the treaty for their demolition. To dismantle them while the French had them in possession would be a disgrace to the five Powers. At the same time Palmerston promised, that if the French would withdraw, the Powers would lose no time in beginning the discussion with Leopold for the purpose of selecting the fortresses to be dismantled. The weakest point in Palmerston's position was that Leopold was anxious that a portion of the French troops should remain for his protection, but by the conclusion of a six weeks' armistice between Holland and Belgium, the Foreign Secretary was able to obviate any objections that might be raised either by the French or Belgian Governments against the departure of Gérard. His mingled conciliation and firmness gained the day, and on the 15th of September, Talleyrand told the Plenipotentiaries that all the French troops would be immediately withdrawn from Belgium.

Though the obstinacy of the Dutch King delayed the final establishment of Belgian independence, there was no longer any danger of a rupture between England and France, and the *rapprochement* between the two Powers greatly facilitated the last stages of the negotiations. A fresh set of conditions, known as the Twenty-four Articles, were agreed upon by the Conference on the 14th of October, and, on the 15th of the following month, embodied in a formal treaty which the Powers were to enforce upon Holland and Belgium, if either of them refused to accept it. As might be expected, the conduct of the Dutch King had not strengthened his

cause. He was now required to surrender part of Luxemburg in exchange for a portion of Limburg, to give the Belgians a free passage through Maestricht and the free navigation of the Scheldt. It was in vain that during the following year Holland attempted to detach first Prussia and then Russia from the European concert; Prussia was afraid to act alone, and Russia was bound to Britain by pecuniary ties, which Palmerston seized the first opportunity to renew. At the same time he made one more effort to smooth away difficulties, and his *Thème*, as the document was called in which he attempted a final compromise between the rival Governments, is one of the finest examples that the State Papers can furnish of his power of manipulating the minutiae of diplomacy. Its ungracious rejection by the Dutch Plenipotentiaries placed them completely in the wrong, and enabled the Western Powers to resort to immediate coercion. In September, 1832, Talleyrand and Palmerston had exhausted their stock of patience, and, unsupported by the representatives of the other Powers, who withdrew from the Conference, they decided that the time for action had come. The King of Holland was informed that if the Dutch would not retire from the citadel of Antwerp before the 12th of November, force would be employed. With commendable punctuality a French army corps under Gérard marched on Antwerp, while an English fleet blocked the Scheldt. After a bombardment, the citadel surrendered on the 23rd of December; and though the King of Holland declined to recognise the kingdom of Belgium until seven years later, its existence was none the less an assured fact.

The verdict of posterity has recognised that the creation of a free Belgium was almost exclusively the work

of Palmerston, and has reckoned it as perhaps the greatest of his many great achievements. To the people of his generation it did not appear in quite so satisfactory a light. It seemed to them that the employment of force robbed the arrangement of much of its credit. The spectacle of two powerful nations combining to coerce a weak people is seldom calculated to provoke enthusiasm, and it was remembered that if the Dutch had been left to themselves they would have beaten the Belgians out of the field. Lord Palmerston, in a speech made on Feb. 18th, 1833, justly complained that

He had been ridiculed on all hands, and held up to the derision of that House and that of the country; but the country was too enlightened to ridicule him for endeavouring to preserve peace by protocols, as it had been called. The hon. member for Essex had talked contemptuously of his hammering out protocols; he found fault with the Ministers adherence to pacific counsels; and he was no less displeased, it appeared, with the departure from them in the case of the attack on Antwerp. Whether they attempted to preserve the peace of Europe, so much endangered by the quarrel of the Dutch and Belgians—whether they endeavoured to preserve peace by persuasion or by force, the course which they thought it advisable to pursue was equally distasteful to these hon. gentlemen. He trusted, however, that the House and the people would better appreciate their endeavours to prevent a war in Europe, and the conflict of political principles which would inevitably have arisen if such a war had taken place.

Moreover, of the coercing Powers, France had taken the more brilliant share in the combined operations; and the memories of Waterloo were too recent for the more hot-headed of Englishmen, among whom might be reckoned King William, to be able to contemplate with equanimity the spectacle of England putting up with the second place when France had the first; indeed, they would barely contemplate the idea

of an Anglo-French alliance at all.\* These vapourings found, however, but little voice in the House of Commons, where an attack on Palmerston's treatment of the Dutch, which was made on the motion of Sir Robert Peel, collapsed completely.

The wise government of King Leopold completed the stability of the edifice which Palmerston had set up, "his experimental little Belgian monarchy," as it was called at the time; and when the year 1848 witnessed a second opening of the flood-gates of revolution, Belgium was one of the very few of the monarchies of Europe which was not temporarily submerged. Under the prudent rule of Leopold's son, the arrangement has held good down to our day, but its existence appears to be imperilled now that the nation chiefly interested in its continuance is inferior in military strength to those which might be disposed to its violation. This much must be said of Lord Palmerston's creation, even by the most hostile critic: that it was in accordance with justice, that it was in accordance with expediency, and that it has stood thus far the test of time.

\* This feeling found expression in "H. B.'s" cartoons, in one of which Lord Palmerston is depicted as a blind man led by the French poodle Talleyrand to the brink of a precipice.

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## CHAPTER III.

## THE QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE.

1830-1833.

Affairs in Greece, Italy, Germany, and Poland—Tyranny of Dom Miguel in Portugal—Satisfaction obtained by England and France—Dom Pedro's descent on Portugal—He is aided by English Volunteers—Death of Ferdinand of Spain—Combination of the two Pretenders—The Quadruple Treaty—Its immediate success—Coolness between England and France—Its effect on Spanish politics—The Spanish Legion—End of the Carlist war.

DURING the first years of his reign at the Foreign Office the affairs of Belgium appear to have absorbed Palmerston's attention almost entirely. He played only a subordinate part in the negotiations which seemed for the time being to have brought the Greek troubles to a close, when in February 1833 Prince Otho of Bavaria was sent by the Powers to rule over the Hellenes, with a guaranteed loan and a considerably better frontier than that which had been offered to Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. His comments, however, show a just appreciation of the worth of the settlement; the new frontier was "beautiful," but he saw that the choice of a youth of eighteen to govern the distracted kingdom was to be deplored. In a similar spirit he contented himself with a mere expression of adverse opinion

when Austria proposed to tighten her hold on Italy through the device of a confederation under her protection, and when Metternich endeavoured to persuade the Diet of Frankfort to compel the minor potentates of Germany to abrogate the free constitutions which had been granted under stress of popular discontent. With regard to the rebellion in Poland, he maintained an attitude of almost ostentatious indifference, taking his stand on the ground that the Treaty of Vienna must be maintained. This appeal to a treaty which he was doing his best to convert into a dead letter, as far as Belgium was concerned, had in it not a little inconsistency; the real fact was that the British Government had no ships to send into the Baltic, and was too prudent to threaten intervention, even in concert with France, when unable to follow up its words by deeds. "God is too high," runs a Polish proverb, "and Poland too far." The Foreign Secretary ventured, indeed, when the gallant resistance of the Poles had been finally crushed, to try to obtain a little relaxation of their punishment, by appealing again to the Viennese compact. Under that treaty it had been declared that Poland should be attached to Russia by its constitution. It was fair, therefore, urged Palmerston, to consider that the Polish constitution existed under the sanction of the treaty. "Not in the least," was the upshot of the curt reply of the Russian minister, Count Nesselrode, "the constitution was not at all a consequence of the treaty, but a spontaneous act of the sovereign power of the Czar; it had been annulled by the fact of the rebellion." After a final remonstrance, sent through Lord Durham, who was then on a special mission to St. Petersburg, Palmerston ceased to press for better terms for the conquered race. It is difficult to see what more

he could have done, and the most bitter of critics must acknowledge that his action was at any rate straightforward. He did not, as did the French ministry, encourage the Poles during the brief hour of their success, and desert them in their despair.

While defending his Polish policy in a somewhat angry House of Commons, Palmerston pointed out that no effectual aid could be given to the insurgents without involving Europe in a general war, in which the Poles would have been crushed by the joint forces of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, long before aid could reach them from the west. There was, however, a quarter of Europe where English intervention could be employed with effect, and upon it Palmerston, the Belgian affair being practically settled, proceeded to focus his attention, waiting for an opportunity to strike. This was the Peninsula, where anarchy was rapidly gaining the upper hand, with the usual results that foreigners were being maltreated, and satisfaction was difficult to obtain. In Portugal, Dom Miguel had rapidly become unendurable. His officers imprisoned and ill-treated British subjects, and his captains seized British vessels. At first, what Palmerston termed "a peremptory demand for immediate and full redress," was sufficient. The offending officials and captains were dismissed, and full compensation was paid to the victims of Miguel's tyranny and inefficiency. When, however, the French Government made similar demands, Miguel had the effrontery to ask for English protection, and to refer the French to England for satisfaction. Though Lord Palmerston sternly informed him that the British Government was not bound by its treaties with Portugal to "blindly take up a quarrel into which a Portuguese administration might, by its infatuation, plunge its country," he remained firm

in his obstinacy, with the result that a French squadron was despatched to the Tagus, which captured his vessels one by one, and finally took the whole of the Portuguese fleet without firing a shot.

The Tory party, as usual, was highly indignant at these French successes, but, as Palmerston subsequently pointed out, it would have been absurd for England to exact reparation on her own account, and at the same time to prevent France, on her side, from obtaining redress. And the value of the good understanding with France became even more clearly evident when, on the arrival of Dom Pedro of Brazil in Europe to support the forlorn fortunes of his daughter, Dom Miguel had recourse to a fresh reign of terror, which filled the Lisbon gaols with more than a thousand additional victims. Of course, Englishmen and Frenchmen were soon involved in this wholesale persecution, and English naval officers were beaten in the streets of Lisbon. Acting in concert with his French colleague, Captain Markland, the commander of the British squadron in the Tagus, immediately sent ships up the river to protect British residents, and Palmerston, thoroughly endorsing his conduct, sent two men-of-war to his support. During the civil war which followed it was, as Peel pointed out in a spirit of censure, the "actual assistance of France and the countenance of Britain," which enabled the cause of Dom Pedro to hold its own, and ultimately to prevail. Vessels were fitted out in French and English ports without any opposition from the authorities ; there was a large contingent of English volunteers in the army with which Pedro entered Oporto ; it was an Englishman, Captain Charles Napier, who commanded his fleet when, on July 2nd, 1833, it annihilated Miguel's navy off Cape St. Vincent, "to the great delight," wrote

Greville, "of the Whigs, and equal mortification of the Tories." A month before the Duke of Wellington had carried, in a sense condemnatory of the Government, an address in the House of Lords in favour of a policy of neutrality, which was met in the House of Commons by a resolution approving Palmerston's conduct of affairs. Speaking to the nation, Palmerston, as in duty bound, contended, with some plausibility, that the British Government had acted with perfect good faith to both of the belligerent parties. His supporters made little attempt to conceal their satisfaction at the wholesale breaches of the Foreign Enlistment Act committed by English volunteers when they joined Donna Maria's army and saved constitutionalism in Portugal.

For the moment it seemed as if Napier's victory had ruined Dom Miguel's fortunes, but when all seemed lost his cause received considerable reinforcement through the raising of the Carlist banner in Spain. On the 29th of September 1833, Ferdinand VII., the most worthless of an indifferent race, died, leaving behind him two little daughters by his fourth wife, Christina, whom on his death-bed he had appointed Regent. Upon Spain was immediately inflicted a succession question precisely similar to that which was ruining Portugal. By the Pragmatic Sanction, or edict, of 1713, the succession of females had been limited, through a modification of the Salic law, to cases in which there was no direct or collateral male issue, and during the earlier years of Ferdinand's reign the heir to the throne had been his brother Don Carlos, in whom were centred the hopes of the Ultra-Absolutists and Clericalists. Shortly after his fourth marriage, however, Ferdinand issued a new Pragmatic Sanction repealing that of 1713, and restoring the old Castilian custom under which females

could inherit, and to this arrangement he adhered during the last year of his life. In Spain, therefore, as in Portugal, an uncle representing the Absolutist cause was opposed to a niece whose friends, whether they wished it or not, were forced to become Constitutionalists. At the time of Ferdinand's death, Carlos was with Miguel at Evora, and it was probable that if he were to make a dash for the throne, he would meet with but feeble resistance.

The moral support of England and France, implied in their prompt recognition of the child-queen Isabella, saved her throne for the moment, but it was evident that a mere declaration of sympathy was not enough. A decisive blow must be dealt at both the Pretenders; and Lord Palmerston so contrived it that, as he wrote to his brother, not only did it "settle Portugal, and go some way to settle Spain also, but, what is of more permanent and extensive importance, it establishes an . . . alliance among the constitutional States of the West which will serve as a powerful counterpoise to the Holy Alliance of the East." Like all strokes of genius, the proceeding was extremely simple. On the 22nd of April 1834, a Quadruple Treaty was signed by England, France, Spain, and Portugal, by which the four Powers bound themselves to compel Carlos and Miguel to withdraw from the Peninsula.

I carried it through the Cabinet by a *coup de main* [wrote Palmerston to his brother, with a chuckle] taking them by surprise and not leaving them time to make objection. I was not equally successful with old Talley and the French Government, for they have objections in plenty. But they were all as to the form in which I had proposed to make them parties to the transaction [*i.e.*, that France should give her consent to an arrangement previously concluded between England, Spain, and Portugal], not to the thing itself.

Palmerston's triumph was immediate and apparently complete. Metternich was much annoyed, and would certainly have interposed on behalf of Don Carlos if Palmerston had not taken the initiative. "Isabella," he wrote to the Austrian minister at Paris, "is the Revolution incarnate in its most dangerous form; Don Carlos represents the monarchical principle hand to hand with pure revolution." But the instant collapse of the Pretenders left him no excuse for intervention. Miguel threw up the game and went to Genoa, Carlos to London.

Nothing [writes Palmerston on June 27] ever went so well as the Quadruple Treaty. It has ended a war which might otherwise have lasted months. Miguel, when he surrendered, had with him from twelve to sixteen thousand men, with whom he could have marched into Spain, forty-five pieces of artillery, and twelve hundred cavalry. Had he dashed into Spain, and taken Carlos with him, there was only Rodil with ten thousand men between him and Madrid, and part of Rodil's army was suspected of Carlism. But the moral effect of the treaty cowed them all—generals, officers, and men; and that army surrendered without firing a shot.

"The cause of Carlos," continued Palmerston, "is desperate"; but there he made a mistake. Carlos reappeared in Spain, and his arms, though confined to the northern provinces, were there, thanks to the abilities and ferocity of his general Zumalacarregui, uniformly successful. The Isabellists were unfortunate in their chief; for Christina, though a woman of great ability, was wholly ignorant of government, and much addicted to gallantry. But, worst of all, Constitutionalism in Spain proved to be a plant of sickly growth; the forms of party government were there, a ministry and an opposition, Moderados and Progressists, but the spirit was wanting; there were no fixed principles, no political creeds, nothing but envy, strife, division, and a struggle

for the loaves and fishes of office. These evils were intensified by the growing want of cordiality between France and England; for when the British minister at Madrid gave advice to a Progressist premier, it was an effective counterblow for the representative of France to promise moral support to the Moderado leader of the Opposition.

It was in 1835, after the Whigs had returned to office under Melbourne, that the *entente cordiale* between England and France, which had won Belgium its liberty and saved Portugal from Miguel, began to wane and perish until, to anticipate a saying of Palmerston's at the time of the Spanish marriages, there was neither *entente* nor *cordialité*. This unfortunate coolness may undoubtedly be traced, to a considerable extent, to personal causes. Talleyrand, the *doyen* of the diplomatic world entertained strong feelings of antipathy towards Palmerston, who probably spoke as he wrote of him, as "old Talley," and who certainly treated him, though quite unintentionally, with scanty courtesy. Madame de Lieven, with the usual exuberance of feminine spite, informed Greville that it was impossible to describe the contempt as well as dislike which the whole Corps Diplomatique had for Palmerston, and, pointing to Talleyrand who was sitting close by, *surtout lui*. In 1835 the old Prince returned to Paris, and promptly took his revenge on the English secretary by informing Louis Philippe that intimate relations with England were no longer worth preserving, and that Palmerston was hopelessly untrustworthy. The result of these representations was that France began to draw rapidly nearer to the autocratic Powers, whereby, as Palmerston pointed out in a letter to Lord Granville, "she [a constitutional monarchy] was placing herself

in a false position, and at no distant time would find her mistake."

The informal dissolution of the Quadruple Alliance naturally had its effect upon the fortunes of Isabella. Little or no head was made against the Carlist generals, whose hideous ferocity was almost worthy of Alva; ministry succeeded ministry; and the constitutional cause, assailed by the forces of absolutism from without, was nearly shattered by a revolutionary outbreak from within. The Queen Regent soon discovered that the Quadruple Treaty was far from proving a good working plan. The joint intervention of England and France, which would have ended the war in a moment, was out of the question; and neither of the Powers was willing to act as the other's cat's-paw by marching into Spain alone. "France," said Louis Philippe to the Chambers, "keeps the blood of her children for her own cause." There was even a time when Lord Palmerston accused the French Court of openly sympathising with the Carlists, and when the Pretender's bands were allowed to smuggle arms across the Spanish frontier in direct contravention to the supplementary articles of the Treaty.

Under the circumstances, Palmerston was forced to play a somewhat unsatisfactory part. At one time, in accordance with the terms of the Treaty, a British squadron was stationed on Spanish coasts with orders to co-operate with the Isabellists; but such assistance was only partial in its operation, and had but little effect on the ultimate result of the war. Even less effective was the British legion which in 1835 was allowed by an Order in Council to volunteer for Spanish service under Colonel de Lacy Evans. All the arguments that had been used against the volunteers to Portugal could be

used, and were used, with even greater strength on the present occasion. Lord Mahon pointed out in an exceedingly telling speech, made on March 10th, 1837, that, even if it were allowed that intervention in the affairs of Spain were justifiable, the means adopted were the worst that could have been chosen. "It was peace without tranquillity, war without honour. . . . If the noble lord was determined to unclose the temple of peace for war, he should have thrown open the main portal through which British soldiers could have walked upright; and not have sent them through a side door, by which they had to creep upon their hands and knees through the slimy and intricate intrigues of the court of Madrid." On the 17th of April, Sir Henry Hardinge criticised the military side of the question, and argued that Spain, where the butchery of prisoners was the order of the day, was no school for British soldiers. He had been for a long time in the army, but he had never witnessed or heard of such acts of insubordination, mutiny, and ferocity, as had been committed by the soldiers of the Legion. Palmerston made brilliant replies to these attacks, and, as usual, carried the House with him, but his examples, taken from the Elizabethan epoch, of auxiliary forces sent to the aid of the Huguenots and the Protestants in the Low Countries, were really not much to the point, any more than his periods about the advantages of a Constitutional over an Absolutist government. The success of the Legion would have cut the ground from under the feet of the Tories; but, alarmed by a proclamation issued by Don Carlos that all foreign prisoners would be shot, half-disciplined, half-starved, and grossly neglected by the Spanish Government, General Evans's force accomplished little beyond co-operating in the important

relief of Bilbao, and, after a bad defeat at Hernani, it was eventually disbanded in 1838. Of course, the Foreign Secretary's best excuse for this intermittent form of armed assistance would have been that, in face of the suspicious attitude of France, direct intervention would have been attended with the utmost risk, but it was impossible to make use of that argument in public. When civil war ceased in Spain through the sheer exhaustion of the Carlists, Palmerston could claim, indeed, that the Liberal cause had been triumphant, but not that the victory had been speedily gained or that its results were likely to be permanent; for after the Carlists came military *pronunciamientos*, and Constitutionalism, buffeted by the winds of faction, was very slow to take root. It might fairly be said, however, that he had done his best with unpromising materials, and that, if Louis Philippe had proved true to his word, the result would have been very different.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE QUADRILATERAL ALLIANCE.

1831-1841.

Lord Palmerston and the Porte—Ibrahim Pasha's advance on Constantinople—Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi—Anti-Russian policy of Lord Palmerston—The first Afghan war—Burnes's despatches—Collapse of the Turkish Empire—Divergence of views between England and France—The Quadrilateral Alliance—Lord Palmerston's difficulties—His bold course of action—His estimate of the situation—Louis Philippe gives way—The fall of Acre—Lord Palmerston's treatment of Guizot—Settlement of the Syrian question—Lord Palmerston's marriage.

THOUGH Lord Palmerston, when Minister at War, had viewed the Greek struggle for independence with ardent approval, and though his aphorism concerning the Turks—"What energy can be expected from a people with no heels to their shoes?"—has passed into a proverb, he was never a believer in the hopeless degeneracy of the Ottoman Porte. "All that we hear every day of the week," he once wrote to Sir Henry Bulwer, "about the decay of the Turkish Empire, and its being a dead body or a sapless trunk, and so forth, is pure and unadulterated nonsense. . . . If we can procure for it ten years of peace under the joint protection of the five Powers, and if those years are profitably employed in

reorganizing the internal system of the Empire, there is no reason whatever why it should not become again a respectable Power." This opinion, even if not permanently tenable, was probably that of the majority of Englishmen at the time of the formation of Lord Grey's ministry, when the Sultan Mahmoud was making real, if somewhat rough and ready, attempts to introduce reforms into his dominions. Palmerston further thought that the downfall of the Porte would be far more likely to occur through external violence than through internal combustion. For the moment, however, the final blow seemed likely to come from one who was nominally its subject. For in 1831 Mahomet Ali, the crafty Albanian who had risen from the position of tobacco-seller to that of the Pasha of Egypt, sent his adopted son Ibrahim against Acre, the fortress which had defied Napoleon ; its fall in the following May placed all Syria at his mercy. The surrender of Damascus and Antioch followed ; the line of the Taurus was crossed in July ; in October the brilliant Ibrahim scattered to the winds at Konieh the last of the Turkish armies, and there was nothing to prevent his casting out his shoe over Constantinople.

The peril of the Porte was undoubtedly extreme, and Palmerston was anxious that an affirmative response should be made to the Sultan's appeals for assistance, which reached England about the time of the battle of Konieh. The Cabinet, however, overruled his opinion, and he must have felt considerably annoyed when it fell to him to defend English non-intervention in the House of Commons, on the ground that our naval operations on the Dutch coast and elsewhere were so extensive, that it would have been impossible to send to the Mediterranean such a squadron as would have served

the purpose of the Porte, and at the same time have comported with the naval dignity of England. His appeal rejected, though with regret, by England, and with less ceremony by France, where public sympathy was wholly with the Pasha, Mahmoud, in his despair, applied to his ancient enemy, Nicholas of Russia. The response was prompt; a Russian army was despatched to the mouth of the Bosphorus, Ibrahim retired before it, and Constantinople was saved. But the price was heavy; by the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, signed by the representatives of the two Powers, on the 8th of July 1833, the Porte bound itself, in return for a promise from Russia of military and naval assistance whenever required, to come to an "unreserved understanding" with that Power "upon all matters which concern their respective tranquillity and safety," that is, to allow Nicholas to interfere when he pleased in Turkish affairs. A secret article further engaged the Porte "to close the strait of the Dardanelles, that is to say, not to allow any foreign vessels of war to enter therein under any pretext whatsoever." In short, the treaty made Mahmoud the vassal of Nicholas, and the Black Sea a Russian lake.

The natural result of this master-stroke of Russian diplomacy, the terms of which were known throughout Europe within six weeks, was that Palmerston, with the full approval of his eccentric sovereign, and the applause of the Radicals in Parliament, was during the remainder of the reign of William IV. decidedly anti-Russian in his policy. He joined with the French Government in a vigorous protest against the treaty, but it was, of course, mere waste-paper. The destruction of the liberties of Poland in the previous year; the conclusion in the following year of a new treaty with the

Porte, by which Russia acquired fresh territory in Asia ; the mandate issued by Russia, Prussia, and Austria, for the occupation of the little republic of Cracow, the last remnant of independent Poland, by Austrian troops ; the presence of Russian agents at the court of the Shah of Persia ; the Russian intrigues for the ruin of Colonel Chesney's expedition to open up the Euphrates route to India—all these facts taken together seemed to point to a systematic attempt on the part of Nicholas to aggrandize his dominions, and that at the expense of England. "Russia," wrote Palmerston to his brother, "is pursuing a system of universal aggression on all sides, partly from the personal character of the Emperor, partly from the permanent system of her government." In the House of Commons, O'Connell, Mr. Attwood, and other Radicals, hurled abuse at the Czar, and the British fleet was sent to cruise in the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles ; but though the two countries were on the verge of a quarrel, no actual outbreak took place.

If Palmerston shrank from war with Russia from motives of prudence, Nicholas refrained from direct hostilities with England because he found others to fight his battles for him. The mission of Russian agents to Teheran and Cabul was the means employed, not for the last time, to lure England into operations beyond the Indus, and to drain her of wealth and strength without hazarding a single Cossack or a single rouble. Excuses may be advanced for the first Afghan war, as for every war. The Persian attack on Herat was undoubtedly of the most formidable nature, and was only averted by chance in the person of Eldred Pottinger, and Melbourne's cabinet were of opinion that "decisive measures" in Afghanistan were necessary to counterbalance Russian preponderance in Persia. Lord

Heytesbury, the Governor-General of India, who was known to be an admirer of Nicholas, was accordingly recalled; and Lord Auckland sent out with instructions to inaugurate a forward policy. Translated into action, the forward policy resolved itself into Burnes's mission to Cabul, which was checkmated by the counter mission of the Russian Vicovitch, and next into the expedition to Cabul with the object of deposing Dost Mahomed, who had proved an able ruler, and crowning in his stead the incompetent refugee, Shah Soojah. Endeavours have been made to fix the blame for this mad leap in the dark upon Palmerston; Lord Auckland, it has been said, was *his* Governor-general, but though there is strong presumption, documentary proof is wanting. Certainly Lord Palmerston was the man of action in the Melbourne Cabinet, and at this time was full of distrust of Russia. On the other hand, it may be noticed that though he strongly approved of the expedition, he did not, even when its prospects were most favourable, assume any direct responsibility for it. In a letter to Lord Melbourne, he said:

Auckland seems to have taken a just view of the importance of making Afghanistan a British and not a Russian dependency, since the autocrat has determined that it shall not be left to itself. If we succeed in taking the Afghans under our protection, and in garrisoning (if necessary) Herat, we shall regain our ascendancy in Persia, and get our commercial treaty with that Power. But British ascendancy in Persia gives security on the eastward to Turkey, and tends to make the Sultan more independent, and to place the Dardanelles more securely out of the grasp of Nicholas. Again, our baffling on so large a scale the intrigues and attempts of Russia cannot fail to add greatly to the moral weight and political influence of England, and to help us in many European questions, while it must also tend to give us strength and authority at home.

This is the language of the supporter, rather than of the creator, of a line of action, but it must be owned

that it is exceedingly compromising. The idea that Cabul was the centre whence prosperity was to illuminate the British Empire, is completely unlike the sobriety of most of Palmerston's conclusions, and shows that his judgment was for the time being completely clouded by irritation. The actual result of the campaign was indeed a grave comment on his extravagant anticipations, and his argument that the disaster was caused by the neglect of proper military precautions will not bear investigation, for the second Afghan war proved conclusively, even if the first did not, the futility of an attempt on the part of England, to keep a permanent hold on Cabul. But Lord Palmerston and his colleagues were able to reap the credit which attended the commencement of operations, while to their successors fell the task of dealing with the collapse.

Connected with the declaration of the Afghan war was a proceeding of political expediency, the mention of which would probably be omitted by a panegyrist of the Melbourne ministry—possibly without much danger of detection—but which a candid biographer of the most important member of that ministry can hardly leave unnoticed. We allude to the suppression of passages in the despatches of Sir Alexander Burnes which were unfavourable to the forward policy of the Government, with the general result that the unfortunate envoy became the ostensible defender of a course of action to which he was directly opposed. The proceeding was, to say the least of it, one of doubtful morality, and if Burnes had lived, a speedy detection must have certainly ensued. As it was, the murderous hand of Akbar Khan saved the Government from an ignominious exposure. The stigma of complicity in the war was allowed to remain on Burnes's memory, and, though

the truth had leaked out in driplets, it was not until the next generation that the whole scandal became publicly known. Here, again, it is impossible to fix on Palmerston more than a share in the responsibility for the collective sins of the Melbourne Cabinet; but his line of defence, when in 1861 the whole question was brought before the House of Commons by Mr. Dunlop, would seem to prove that he was more than a tacitly consenting party to the transaction, and even regarded it as rather praiseworthy than otherwise.

It is quite true [he said] that several of the despatches were curtailed and parts omitted, but enough remained to reveal the outline of affairs which I have traced. . . . If, on the one hand, passages containing the opinions of Lieutenant Burnes have been omitted, on the other hand, a despatch written by Sir William Macnaghten, by the order of Lord Auckland, censuring in very severe terms and disavowing totally the policy of Lieutenant Burnes, has also been omitted. The opinions of Lieutenant Burnes which are omitted from the despatches formed no elements in the policy which was adopted, and it was unnecessary to state reasons and opinions by which the Indian Government had not been guided. It is not necessary when you give reasons for a course you pursue to give also the reasons against that course. They form no part of your case. You state reasons why you do not do a thing, but it is not usual to state reasons which you refuse to accept and do not act upon.

Lord Palmerston's views as to the composition of State Papers may be left severely alone. If all Blue Books are compiled in this fashion, they are indeed, as Sir John Kaye, the historian of the Afghan war, termed those containing the despatches of Sir Alexander Burnes, counterfeits which the ministerial stamp forces into currency, defrauding a present generation, and handing down to posterity a chain of dangerous lies.

Long before the horrors of the retreat from Cabul had been avenged by General Pollock, the development of events in Europe had converted Palmerston from an

attitude hostile to Russia to one of cordial co-operation with the Czar. The treaty of Unkiar Skelessi had gained the Porte a respite; it had by no means reduced Mehemet Ali to impotence. The Pasha was determined to make himself Lord of the Levant: Mahmoud, untaught by his previous disasters, was panting for revenge. It was only by supreme exertions, by threats, cajoleries, and naval demonstrations, that the Powers, forced by the acuteness of the crisis to act with some appearance of concert, were able to prevent the two from flying at each other's throats. At last, in 1839, the inevitable collision occurred; once more Ibrahim Pasha smote the Turkish troops hip and thigh; their ruin was followed, in startling succession, by the death of Mahmoud, who was succeeded by a feeble boy, Abd-el-Medjid, and the treachery of the Turkish admiral, who handed over his fleet to the triumphant Mehemet Ali.

Once more the Turkish empire seemed to be *in extremis*, for Mehemet Ali declined to be satisfied with anything smaller than the entire and hereditary possession of his conquests, the concession of which would at once have reduced the Porte to the position of a second-rate Power. Intervention was necessary, and collective intervention, for if Russia had been allowed to go to the rescue alone, the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi would certainly have been renewed in some more objectionable form. It was, therefore, Palmerston's object to obtain united action, and so to merge the Unkiar Skelessi agreement in some more general arrangement for which the Powers would be conjointly responsible. But directly the coercion of Mehemet Ali came under discussion, a complete divergence of opinion between France and England was forced into prominence. How-

ever anxious the French Ministry might be to keep on good terms with England, there could be no doubt that the people were all in favour of the Egyptian. The establishment of French influence in the land of the Pharaohs, the high-road to India, had been a long-cherished dream, which Napoleon for a moment had made a reality ; and if it was a dream of pleasant anticipation for the patriot Frenchman, it was not the less delectable because it was a familiar nightmare to English ministers. When therefore Palmerston urged that Mehemet Ali should be compelled to restore the Turkish fleet without delay, Marshal Soult, the French Premier, flatly declined to adopt the proposal ; and subsequent negotiations showed that while England was desirous of confining Mehemet Ali to Egypt, Soult would gladly see him in possession of Syria and Arabia. M. de Rémusat, at a later stage of the complication, avowed in the Chamber that the aim of the French Government was to establish a second-rate Power in the Mediterranean, whose fleet might unite with that of France as a counterpoise to that of England.

Inaction at such a crisis would have resulted, as Palmerston afterwards wrote to Lord Melbourne, in the " practical division of the Turkish empire into two separate and independent States, whereof one would be the dependency of France, and the other a satellite of Russia ; and in both of which our political independence would be annulled and our commercial interests sacrificed." He resolved, therefore, to throw aside the *entente cordiale*, and to enter into intimate relations with the autocratic Powers, of whom the Czar, delighted at the discomfiture of Louis Philippe, whom he scorned as a constitutionalist and a *parvenu*, was more than ready to meet him half way. Baron Brünnow was sent to

London, and soon came to terms with Palmerston, who went, as he wrote to Sir Henry Bulwer, on the sound principle that “there was no wise medium between confidence and distrust; and that if we tied up Russia by treaty we might trust her, and, trusting her, we had better mix no evidence of suspicion with our confidence.” It was agreed that England, Austria, and France—unless she chose to hold aloof—should operate against Mehemet Ali on the coasts of Syria, Egypt, and in the Mediterranean, that to Russia should be entrusted the defence of Constantinople from Ibrahim Pasha, it being understood, however, that her forces were under the control of the Allies, and—the additional stipulation was Palmerston’s—that in the event of a Russian fleet entering the Bosphorus, a British and French fleet should simultaneously enter the Dardanelles.

Neither Soult nor Thiers, who succeeded him as head of the Ministry in March 1840, dared to steer a bold course. They feared public opinion if they joined the Powers; their sovereign would not allow them to espouse the cause of Mehemet Ali. Thiers was indeed suspected, probably unjustly, of trying to countermine Palmerston by inaugurating a fresh negotiation between Mehemet Ali and the Porte. Lord Palmerston at once decided upon action. On the 15th of July he signed a Quadrilateral treaty with Russia, Austria, and Prussia on the one hand, and the representative of the Porte on the other, by which the four Powers bound themselves to carry into effect the arrangements already concluded for defending the Porte and bringing the Pasha to reason. The latter was informed that he should receive the hereditary sovereignty of Egypt and the Pashalic of Acre for life if he submitted within ten days; if he was obstinate, Egypt alone should be his portion. Pharaoh’s

heart was hardened, and he refused to accept any terms which did not include Egypt and the whole of Syria.

Lord Palmerston had a most difficult game to play at this crisis but his nerve and resource, or, as his enemies were wont to term the quality—and sometimes with perfect justice—unscrupulousness, enabled him to sweep the board. It was almost a case of *Athanasius contra mundum*, for, with the exception of the Czar, the members of the Quadruple Alliance were by no means disposed to go to extremes. Metternich had no sooner agreed to help to coerce the Pasha than he began to throw cold water on the scheme, and the Prussian Minister followed his directions with dog-like fidelity. The English Government was informed that Austria had only joined the Quadrilateral Alliance with the weight of moral support, her position as a purely continental Power not allowing her to play any other part in active operations against Egypt. Lord Grauville, our Minister at Paris, was also of opinion that Palmerston had embarked upon a most dangerous course. At home the Court was against him, chiefly through the representations of the King of the Belgians, who was thoroughly alarmed at the prospect of a war between his niece and his father-in-law. Even from his colleagues Palmerston met with opposition rather than encouragement. The Whig members of the Cabinet, especially Lord Holland and Lord Clarendon, were by no means in favour of a rupture of the French alliance, and Palmerston, in his letters to his brother, constantly complained of “intrigues and cabals,” instigated apparently by “Bear” Ellice, who, although not a member of the Ministry, had great influence with the chiefs.\*

\* Mr. Ellice, who married Earl Grey's sister, and held the appointments of Secretary to the Treasury and Secretary of War from 1830

When Lord John Russell, who had at first approved of the good understanding with Russia, suddenly veered round and joined the malcontents, the Foreign Secretary's bed was by no means one of roses.

Palmerston, however, confidently steered his way through the storm. His chief protection was the want of initiative in Lord Melbourne, who, although he was so worried that he could neither "eat, nor drink, nor sleep," failed to summon up resolution enough to take to task his resolute brother-in-law—a relationship which had begun in the previous year when Palmerston married the Premier's sister, the widow of Lord Cowper. The reluctant consent of the Premier to the Quadruple Treaty was extorted from him by Palmerston through the simple device of threatened resignation, and the *Greville Memoirs* contain an amusing account of elaborate preparations for a battle royal in the Cabinet which broke down through Melbourne's reluctance to speak his mind. On another occasion it appears that Lord Holland was prepared to attack the management of the Syrian question, but was completely non-plussed by Palmerston, who produced a letter of warning from Sir Henry Bulwer, then Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, which proved that Palmerston's enemies did not scruple to

to 1834, is probably the "E—" of whom Palmerston wrote to Lord John Russell in 1842 that, "upon every great matter which we have had to deal with in our foreign relations while we were in office he was strongly against me, and was always trying to get up a cabal to thwart me; and upon every one of these matters, whether in regard to Belgium, Portugal, Spain, India, Syria, or any other, he was proved by the result to have been wrong. Now one of his most approved methods of cabal is to write away every day to all the leading members of the Whig party, to instil into them or to extract from them opinions adverse to what he thinks my opinions to be. He practised this method very extensively, and with much momentary success, about the Syrian question."

divulge the future proceedings of the English Cabinet in the capital of a nation with whom we were within a little of going to war. It must be admitted that the conduct of the Foreign Secretary was very irritating to an earnest colleague. "Our Cabinet," wrote Greville, "is a complete republic"; he might have added, with an *imperium in imperio*, for Palmerston had established a complete despotism in the Foreign Office. The most important arrangements were concluded entirely on his own responsibility and without consulting anyone; and when he disarmed opposition at home by concessions to France, he took care to neutralize those concessions by inspiring, and perhaps actually writing, the most bitter articles against Louis Philippe in the *Morning Chronicle*. In short, he seemed to look upon the whole affair as an exciting game in which both sides might be pardoned if they hit a little wildly, and did not scruple to trample under foot every tradition which regulated the conduct of Cabinet business. He was not in the least angry with Lord Holland or Lord John Russell; and when the former died, within a few days of the trial of strength in the Cabinet, Palmerston, with his usual magnanimity, hastened to acknowledge that though Lord Holland "thought, or rather felt, strongly on political affairs, he never mixed any personal feeling with his public differences." It cannot be said that Palmerston appeared in an equally favourable light in a war of words waged by him at this time against an obscurer foe, Mr. Urquhart. Furious at his dismissal from the embassy at Constantinople, Mr. Urquhart retaliated by accusing Palmerston of having, in 1836, favoured the voyage of the *Vixen* to the coast of Circassia though it was an infringement of the Russian blockade, and of having formerly countenanced the

publication in the *Portfolio*, a periodical edited by Mr. Urquhart, of various Russian despatches obtained from the Polish insurgents, which constituted a complete exposure of the Machiavellism of Czars and their ministers. Lord Palmerston met both statements, which were of course calculated to damage not a little the friendly relations recently established with Russia, with a flat denial; but the subsequent admissions of Mr. Backhouse, the permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, tended to throw considerable doubts on his veracity; doubts which are, perhaps, strengthened by the complete silence of Lord Palmerston's biographers about the *Portfolio*.

The best defence for Palmerston's high-handed and reckless conduct at the outset of the new reign is that he, almost alone in Europe, had accurately estimated the relative strength of the various factors in the Syrian problem, and was therefore justified in seeking at all hazards to get his own way. He knew that the boasted military strength of Mehemet Ali was a mere imposture, and that though his troops might defeat the Turks, they would crumple up like paper when opposed to Europeans. He knew also that, even if Thiers meant to go to war, the King had too much sense, and that Guizot, then French minister in London, might be relied upon to thwart the extravagances of his truculent little rival. "Thiers will probably at first swagger," he wrote to his *fidus Achates*, Sir Henry Bulwer, ". . . but Louis Philippe is not a man to run amuck, especially without an adequate motive." It was in vain that Thiers tried to impress the Chargé d'Affaires by solemn assurances that *le roi est bien plus belliqueux que moi*.

If Thiers [was Palmerston's reply] should again hold out to you the language of menace, however indistinctly and vaguely shadowed

out, pray retort upon him to the full extent of what he may say to you, and, with that skill of language which I know you to be a master of, convey to him in the most friendly and unoffensive manner possible, that if France throws down the gauntlet of war, we shall not refuse to pick it up ; and that if she begins a war, she will to a certainty lose her ships, colonies, and commerce before she sees the end of it ; that her army of Algiers will cease to give her anxiety, and that Mehemet Ali will just be chucked into the Nile.

Events bore out Palmerston's anticipations to the letter. When Louis Philippe found that language in King Cambyses' vein, formidable preparations at Toulon, and plans for effecting a landing in Turkey, and the seizure of the Balearic Isles, were met by counter declarations of equal spirit and a considerable increase of the English navy, his prudence got the better of him. In October 1840, Thiers was dismissed, Soult was recalled to power, and the cautious Guizot undertook the Foreign Office. The collapse of Thiers anticipated by only a few weeks the collapse of his *protégé* Mehemet Ali. Acting with surprising vigour, the allied fleet bombarded Beyrouth on September the 16th ; on the 26th of that month, Commodore Napier took Sidon ; and on the 3rd of November Acre, the renowned fortress which had defied Napoleon, surrendered, after being exposed for less than three hours to the guns of the allies. Ibrahim Pasha was thereby cut off from Egypt, and had to effect an immediate retreat from a position that had become utterly untenable. " Napier for ever ! " wrote Palmerston to Lord Granville. " Pray try to persuade the King and Thiers that they have lost the game and had better not make a brawl of it."

The sacrifice of Thiers by his master to the fates that wait on failure, undoubtedly smoothed the way to a reconciliation with France, and rendered compromise possible without loss of dignity, where it had been impossible

before. In the face of threats and armaments, it was out of the question for Palmerston to agree to any of Thiers' proposed terms, even if they had been admissible in themselves, which they were not, unless England wished the Levant to become a French lake, and France the dictator of Europe. But concessions might fairly have been made to Guizot; and a generous policy, by healing the wounded *amour propre* of the French nation, would have led in course of time to a complete reconciliation. Palmerston, however, declined to move an inch out of his way. It was not that he was puffed up with pride, on the contrary, even Greville acknowledges that nothing could be more becoming than his bearing in the hour of success; but simply that he hated Louis Philippe, and was determined to pay him out. It is at this point, and not before, that personal motives appear to be predominant in his mind.

In your letter of the 20th [he wrote to Lord Granville] you say that what the French wish is "that the final settlement of the Eastern question shall not appear to have been concluded without their concurrence." But that is exactly what I now wish should appear. If France had joined us in July, and had been party to the coercive measures we undertook, we should have been delighted to have had her assistance, and she would have come in as an ally and protector of the Sultan. But France having then stood aloof, and having since that time avowedly taken part with the Pasha, morally though not physically, if she were now to come in and be a party to the final settlement, it would not be as a friend of the Sultan, but as the protector of Mehemet Ali; and of course we should not permit her to meddle with the affair in that capacity and with such a view.

At the same time the question of prestige undoubtedly entered to a considerable extent into the Foreign Secretary's calculations. He felt that France had defied England and must be made to eat the leek; he was cruel only to be kind, though his kindness took a rather irritating form. In the same way he felt that Mehemet

Ali could not be allowed to retain Syria, less, perhaps, because Syria was of very much importance, than because concessions to Mehemet Ali in the midsummer madness of his triumph would inevitably pave the way to fresh aggressions and impertinences.

What Guizot had desired was that the Quadruple Alliance should be dissolved as a preliminary to peace. Palmerston, however, was determined that France should be kept out in the cold until Mehemet Ali had made his humble submission to the Sultan, and had received in return the hereditary Pashalic of Egypt on terms which emphasized the suzerainty of the Porte in the most unmistakable manner. Having thus guarded against the possibility of Egypt becoming a dependency of France, Palmerston carried out, by a Convention concluded at London on July 18th, 1841, the second part of his programme. Turkey was saved from the clutches of Russia, and the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi reduced to waste paper, by a clause which closed the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to the ships of war of all Powers.

When the Melbourne Ministry, which had only tottered through the last few sessions on sufferance, finally fell in August 1841, Palmerston, though without any following in Parliament, and without much influence in the country, had raised the prestige of England throughout Europe to a height which it had not occupied since Waterloo. He had created Belgium, saved Portugal and Spain from absolutism, rescued Turkey from Russia, and the highway to India from France. He had in fact reached the zenith of his career as Foreign Minister, and Canning, though far greater in his conceptions, had been completely outdone by his disciple in performances. The happy marriage to which allusion has already been made, had completed Palmerston's good

fortune. Lord Melbourne's sister, Lady Cowper, had long been acknowledged as one of the leaders of the fashionable world. With her friends Lady Tankerville and Lady Willoughby she made up a triad of great importance in society. During the remainder of his life, her charms, talents, and enthusiasm were, as even the coldly critical pages of Greville witness, by no means the least important of her husband's sources of strength. In an obituary notice of her by Mr. Hayward, to the fidelity of which Lord Shaftesbury her son-in-law, Mr. Cowper (the present Lord Mount-Temple) her son, and Mrs. Norton, all give evidence, it was said that—"to place her husband and keep him in what she thought his proper position ; to make people see him as she saw him ; to bring lukewarm friends, carping rivals, or exasperated enemies within the genial atmosphere of his conversation; to tone down opposition and conciliate support—this was henceforth the fixed purpose and master passion of her life. . . . The attraction of Lady Palmerston's *salon* at its commencement was the mixed, yet select and refined, character of the assemblage, the result of that exquisite tact and high-breeding which secured her the full benefits of exclusiveness without its drawbacks. The diplomatic corps eagerly congregated at the house of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. So did the politicians; the leading members of the fine world were her habitual associates, and the grand difficulty of her self-appointed task lay in recruiting from among the rising celebrities of public life, fashion or literature. . . . The services of the great lady to the great statesman extended far beyond the creation of a *salon*. What superficial drawers mistook for indiscretion was eminently useful to him. She always understood full well what she was telling, to whom she was telling

it, when and where it should be repeated, and whether the repetition would do harm or good. Instead of the secret that was betrayed, it was the feeler that was put forth; and no one ever knew from or through Lady Palmerston what Lord Palmerston did not wish to be known."

If the evidence of contemporaries is to be believed, this accomplished lady was ready on occasion to serve her husband by very vigorous action. Greville records an occasion on which Lord Brougham was compelled by her indignant remonstrances to convert what would have been a formidable attack on the management of foreign affairs into a mere demonstration; and Count Vitzthum tells us of her relentless ostracism of Liberal members who spoke or voted against Lord Palmerston. She could also crush with an epigram; thus—"I can never forgive Nineveh for having discovered Layard." Of the English stateswomen of the past generation she was by far the most able.

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## CHAPTER V.

## ABERDEEN AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

1841-1846.

Lord Palmerston and the Smaller Powers—Lord Aberdeen—The Chinese War—Policy of the Government—Treaty of 1842—Disputes with the United States—The Boundary Question—The Greely and McLeod affairs—Right of Search—The Ashburton Mission—Lord Aberdeen and France—Palmerston and Home Affairs—The crisis of 1845—His visit to Paris.

THOUGH Palmerston's administration of foreign affairs during the Grey and Melbourne Governments had been distinctly inspiring and eminently successful, it left very bitter recollections behind it in the hearts of many continental nations. Even when the Foreign Secretary was in the right, he had sometimes a wrong way of showing it; and the “swagger and bully” of which he was so fond of accusing the French Ministers was frequently to be found in his own treatment of the minor States of Europe. For instance, in 1838, a paltry dispute about a sulphur monopoly granted by the Government of the Two Sicilies to a French company was terminated by naval hostilities and the capture of Neapolitan vessels by the Mediterranean fleet. “I dined with Lady Holland on Sunday,” writes Greville in January 1842,

“and had a talk with Dedel (the Dutch Ambassador), who said that Palmerston had contrived to alienate all nations from us by his insolence and violence, so that we had not now a friend in the world, while from the vast complication of our interests and affairs we were exposed to perpetual danger.” Of course a Dutchman would hardly be an impartial witness in this instance, but the statement probably contains a modicum of truth.

Greville consoled himself with the reflection that “Aberdeen was doing well, avoiding Palmerston’s impertinence of manner and preserving his energy as to matter”; and certainly the Conservative Foreign Secretary was an adept at the soft answer which turneth away wrath without being an expression of pusillanimity. In the course of one of his philippics against Sir Robert Peel’s Government, Lord Palmerston said that since they had come into office they had been “living on (the Whig) leavings. They have been subsisting on the broken victuals which they found upon our table. They are like a band of men who have made a forcible entrance into a dwelling, and who sit down and carouse upon the provisions they found in the larder.” Now two of Palmerston’s “leavings” were a war with China and a most complicated dispute with the United States, and Lord Aberdeen would probably have gladly dispensed with both of them.

The Chinese war, though perhaps unavoidable, was but little calculated to provoke enthusiasm, inasmuch as it was an “opium” war. The trade in that article of commerce had been expressly declared by the Vermilion Pencil to be contraband; but it had been openly carried on for years without the smallest objection on the part of the Mandarins, until in 1837 the

Chinese Commissioner Lin was sent to Canton with orders from the Emperor to stop it entirely. Now the attitude of the English Government towards the trade had been one of benevolent neutrality. It had been sanctioned by a Committee of the House of Commons, and it formed a valuable source of revenue to India. It was, therefore, allowed to continue, but our superintendents of trade were given to understand that they must on no account mix themselves up with the opium traders. This position was emphasized in a memorandum of the Duke of Wellington, written in March 1835 ; in the instructions taken out by Captain Elliot on his appointment as Superintendent ; and in new instructions sent to him by Lord Palmerston in June 1838. In the last he was told that “ with regard to the smuggling in opium . . . Her Majesty’s Government could not interfere for the purpose of enabling British subjects to violate the laws of the country with which they trade.” It is true that Palmerston afterwards changed his ground, and, in a debate raised by Sir James Graham in 1840, appeared to maintain that the opium traffic was justifiable because the objections of the Celestial authorities to it were not sincere. Opium, he pointed out, was freely grown in China, and the question with the Mandarins was really “ an exportation of bullion question, an agricultural protection question ” ; that is, they did not wish that silver should leave the country in payment for opium, and did wish to encourage Chinese poppy-growing. But so flimsy an excuse was probably a mere *ad captandum* argument advanced during the stress of discussion. The real case for Government was that they could not, if they would, suppress the traffic. As far as every country except China was concerned, opium was a perfectly legitimate

article of trade, and therefore could not be suppressed in the Indian harbours; while it was an important source of revenue which could not be suddenly cut off. If they had established courts in Canton with power of expelling Englishmen who were detected in smuggling the drug, the only result would have been that the trade would have sought other ports along the coasts of China, and that a shriek of indignation against Government interference would have been raised throughout India and England. In short, it was the business of the Chinese to carry out their own laws by keeping up an effective set of custom-house officials, and the British Government might fairly wash their hands of the whole question.

It is clear that as far as the British Government was concerned there was no attempt to force the trade upon the Chinese, and Captain Elliot at Canton had done his best to discountenance it. Circumstances changed when Lin ordered the merchants to deliver up the drug that it might be destroyed, and proceeded to enforce his order by blockading them in Canton with every sort of violence. Then Captain Elliot felt bound to identify himself with the trade, "on the principle that these violent compulsory matters were utterly unjust *per se.*" He persuaded the merchants to surrender the opium into his own hands before handing it over to the Chinese, and gave them bonds on the British Government for its value. Though the position he had taken up was apparently inconsistent with his instructions, it is absurd to blame him for not having left his fellow-countrymen to the mercy of Lin; and his conduct was further justified when the Chinese Commissioner, having destroyed the opium, refused to raise the blockade unless Elliot would promise to enter into an agreement by which all

smuggling vessels were for the future to be confiscated to the Celestial Government and their crews condemned to death. It was felt at home that, even if Elliot had made mistakes, he had tried to do his duty, and must be supported at all hazards. That was the view, not only of Palmerston, but of the great Duke, who, when Lord Stanhope brought on a debate in the House of Lords, threw him over and asserted the justice of the quarrel. His followers were annoyed to the last degree. "I know that," said he to Greville, "and I don't care one damn. I was afraid Lord Stanhope would have a majority, and I have no time not to do what is right."

The opium war, though attacked in both Houses of Parliament, was on the whole popular with the nation. Palmerston and his colleagues, however, did not reap much benefit from it. The operations at the outset were not particularly successful. The island of Chusan was occupied, but proved a hot-bed of fever, in which one man out of every four died, and more than one-half the survivors were invalided. The resistance of the Chinese was so feeble that little glory was to be reaped from the bulletins of victory, while the obstinacy of the Emperor rendered negotiations unavailing until after the downfall of the Whigs. It was left to Elliot's successor, Sir Henry Pottinger, to put a stop to the slaughter of the unfortunate Chinese by a treaty concluded in 1842, by which Hongkong was ceded to England in perpetuity, five ports were thrown open to British traders, and consuls established in them, and an indemnity of nearly four millions and a half sterling agreed upon, in addition to one million and a quarter extracted from Canton by way of ransom. Though the slaughter of the unfortunate Chinese was to be deplored, Lord Palmerston was in all probability only expressing public opinion

when in one of his letters he rejoiced at the "exemplary good licking" which had been inflicted on the Celestials.

The quarrel between England and the United States bequeathed by Lord Palmerston to Lord Aberdeen was of a more serious nature than a little war in which the enemy frequently saved our soldiers the necessity of killing him by putting an end to his own existence. When the Conservatives came into office the two countries were engaged in a diplomatic controversy, conducted on both sides with much acrimony, and having little prospect of termination. One of the subjects at issue was connected with the war of American independence. After the conclusion of the war, the treaty of 1783 had defined the boundary between the States and Canada. But it had been drawn up on defective information, and hence left unsettled almost as many points as it had determined. For instance, the river St. Croix was to be the dividing line on the Atlantic coast. There were about a dozen rivers called St. Croix. It was supposed that a ridge of hills ran between the St. Croix and the St. Lawrence; there was no such ridge. A Commission solved the St. Croix question; the other points in dispute were referred to the King of the Netherlands, who, in 1831, made an award which Lord Palmerston agreed to accept but which was rejected by the Senate of the United States. Subsequent attempts at a compromise, among which was a characteristic proposal of Palmerston's that the disputed territory should be divided into halves between Canada and the States, came to nothing; and the dispute continued to smoulder. It is extremely difficult to form any decided opinion on the relative merits of the rival views advanced, but as neither party was contending for

any very valuable natural frontiers, Lord Palmerston may, perhaps, have been too much inclined to stand out about trifles.

Towards the end of the Whig Ministry the question, which had chiefly been one of academic importance, began to have practical bearings. In 1837, Ebenezer Greely, an official of the State of Maine, who was engaged in making a census, was arrested by the authorities of New Brunswick, on the ground that he was conducting his operations on the wrong side of the frontier. Palmerston thought the Canadians in the right, and Greely remained in prison, until the Governor of New Brunswick set him free out of gratitude for the strict observance of neutrality by Maine during the Canadian rebellion. Far more serious than the arrest of Greely was the McLeod affair. In 1840 a Canadian named McLeod, while on a visit to the State of New York, boasted that he had taken part in the burning of the *Caroline*, a disreputable little American vessel which had conveyed stores during the Canadian rebellion to a promiscuous collection of border ruffians, who had established themselves on Navy Island in the Niagara river, and made common cause with the rebels. The act of destruction, which was directed by a British officer, Colonel McNab, was in itself praiseworthy. Unfortunately, as the destruction of the *Caroline* took place in American waters, and several American citizens were killed during the affray, it provoked considerable and not unnatural indignation in the United States, of which Palmerston took no notice whatever. McLeod, the indiscreet, was promptly seized by the authorities of New York, thrown into prison, and charged with murder.

Lord Palmerston at once rushed to his rescue with more than his usual impetuosity. "The British nation," he

wrote forthwith to Mr. Fox, our Minister at Washington, "will never permit a British subject to be dealt with as the people of New York propose to deal with McLeod without taking a signal vengeance upon the offenders. McLeod's execution would produce war, war immediate and frightful in its character, because it would be a war of retaliation and vengeance." He also instructed Mr. Fox to demand, in the name of the British Government, the immediate release of Alexander McLeod, who had been engaged in "a transaction of a public character . . . an act of public duty," for which no Englishman could be made "personally and individually answerable to the laws of any foreign States." Unfortunately, this was the first occasion on which Palmerston, in spite of American remonstrances, had taken any notice whatever of the destruction of the *Caroline*; and Mr. Daniel Webster, the American Secretary of State, did not fail to point out the omission in his very able reply. He also scored a point off Palmerston, who had styled the crew of the *Caroline* "American pirates," by recalling the Carlist war and the equipment of the Spanish Legion, "for the avowed purpose," he added, rather inexactly, "of aiding a rebellion against a nation with which England was at peace. . . . And yet it has not been imagined that England has at any time allowed her subjects to turn pirates." In fact, Palmerston found in Daniel Webster an opponent worthy of his steel. The American Secretary of State declared that the United States Government could not stop the legal proceedings begun against McLeod by the State of New York, and that the trial must take place. At the same time, while returning a stout answer to Palmerston's somewhat peremptory demands, he took care that McLeod should be well represented by counsel, and

thus succeeded in procuring his acquittal. The game had been well contested, but on the whole Webster must be allowed to have won the greater number of tricks.

There was a third subject of dispute between England and America at this time which Palmerston had far more closely at heart than the boundary or the fate of McLeod. We have mentioned his noble efforts for the suppression of the slave-trade. They were continuous and energetic; and when in 1841 he succeeded in persuading the five Powers, Great Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, to sign a treaty by which they allowed one another a mutual right of search, they seemed to have been crowned with considerable success. Guizot's refusal to ratify the treaty was considered by Palmerston—and rightly—to be a mere piece of spite, a counterstroke to the Quadrilateral Alliance; and far more serious was the refusal of the United States to be a party to it at all. The result was of course that slavers hoisted the American flag, and so escaped unscathed. The British tar, however, was equal to the emergency; it was true he might not search an American vessel, but surely, he contended, he might detain a vessel under an American flag to see if she really was what she professed to be. These proceedings of course produced more diplomatic correspondence of an angry character. Here Palmerston had decidedly the better of the argument:—

What would be the consequence [he wrote] if a vessel engaged in the slave trade could protect herself from search by merely hoisting a United States flag? Why, it is plain that in such case every slave-trading pirate, whether Spanish, Portuguese, or Brazilian, or English, or French, or of whatever nation he might be, would immediately sail under the colours of the United States; every criminal could do that, though he could not procure genuine American papers; and thus all the treaties

concluded among the Christian Powers for the suppression of slave trade could be rendered a dead letter; even the laws of England might be set aside by her own subjects, and the slave traders would be invested with complete impunity.

Everything seemed to point to a prolonged alienation between England and the United States, if not to an absolute rupture.

It was immediately after the hurling of this Palmerstonian thunderbolt that Lord Aberdeen assumed the control of our foreign relations. Under his serener influence, and through the exertions of Lord Ashburton, who was sent by the Peel Ministry on a special mission of conciliation to Washington, compromises were effected on the three points under dispute which were perhaps as satisfactory as compromises can ever be. The Caroline-McLeod affair was settled by an apology for the violation of American waters, though Lord Ashburton maintained that the burning of the vessel was in itself justifiable. With regard to the slave-trade, the United States, while declining to submit their ships to search, agreed to maintain an adequate squadron on the African coast for its suppression. The boundary question was far more difficult to handle, and though the utmost moderation and good sense was brought to bear upon it by Webster and Lord Ashburton, their final definition came in for a good deal of abuse from the "no-surrender" party on both sides of the Atlantic.

Palmerston, who was a very active member of the Opposition, set himself to work to holloa on the hounds. The treaty of Lord Ashburton, "that half-Yankee," as he calls him in one of his letters—he had married an American lady—was denounced as weak retreat before encroachment; and the member for Tiverton expressed a fear lest "the system of purchasing temporary secu-

rity by lasting sacrifices, and of placing the interests of foreign ministers above those of this country, could ever be other than a fatal one to the country, or to the administration which pursue such a course." So sweeping were the charges brought against the Aberdeen foreign policy by the *Morning Chronicle* and other Palmerstonian organs, that Lord John Russell, in the name of the Whig chiefs, ventured on a remonstrance, but the only satisfaction that he received was a reply that "a horse sometimes goes the safer for having his head given to him." And Greville, when he visited him at Broadlands in January 1845, found him :—

Full of vigour and hilarity and overflowing with diplomatic swagger  
He said we might hold any language we pleased to France and  
America, and insist on what we thought necessary, without any apprehension that either would go to war, as both knew how vulnerable  
they are, France with her colonies and America with her slaves; a  
doctrine to which Lord Ashburton by no means subscribes.

But, of course, Lord Palmerston in private conversation and Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons were two very different persons.

On the whole Palmerston's warnings were spoken to deaf ears, in spite of the strong confirmation they received almost immediately from the bellicose attitude assumed by the United States, when Lord Aberdeen, encouraged by the successful delimitation of the eastern boundary, attempted to settle that on the western or Oregon side, and had once more to give up a certain amount of English pretensions in order to secure the remainder. Quite as vigorous were Palmerston's denunciations to his friends of the renewal of the *entente cordiale* with France, and the sacrifices made by Lord Aberdeen from time to time for its preservation; particularly during the somewhat supine acquiescence in the outrages on

Queen Pomaré of Tahiti and the missionary Pritchard by the French Admiral Thouars, though he was willing to own that ample satisfaction was obtained in the end. He also approved of Lord Aberdeen's attempts to preserve peace when France became embroiled in Morocco, and when the appointment of one of Louis Philippe's sons, the anti-English Prince de Joinville, to command the French squadron in the Mediterranean, seemed to portend the occupation of Morocco and possibly war with England. But, on the whole, Palmerston's opinion of Lord Aberdeen's foreign policy may be summed up in his memorable phrase "antiquated imbecility."

Though he generally addressed himself to foreign affairs, Lord Palmerston did not spare the colonial or domestic concerns of the Peel administration. The speeches that are most to his credit during this period are those on the suppression of the slave-trade, upon which, because his spirit was really stirred within him, he delivered himself with earnestness and effect. He was not silent during the debates on the Corn Laws, the abolition of which he urged with the weight of a free-trader of many years standing. But his remarks, though extremely sensible and well chosen, do not seem to show any very intimate knowledge of the subject; while his good-natured banter of the Protectionists, "whose songs of triumph had been turned into cries of lamentation," has about it little of the permanent interest that is attached to Mr. Disraeli's parallel between Peel and the Turkish admiral who "sailed his fleet into the enemy's port," or even to the savage personalities of Lord George Bentinck at the expense of his former leader. Nor did he go to the length of Cobden and Bright; but attempted to steer a middle course, advo-

cating a small fixed duty rather than total abolition. It was about this period that Lord Ashley, who was Lady Palmerston's son-in-law, began to acquire a remarkable influence over his somewhat secular relative. Lord Melbourne had commented on the intimacy in 1841, and hinted that Palmerston might go over to the Tories; and its consequences are to be traced in Palmerston's support of the Factory Bill, and of the curious measure for establishing a Protestant Bishopric at Jerusalem. While he was at the Foreign Office, Palmerston, through the English Minister at the Porte, Lord Ponsonby, had greatly contributed to the realisation of the latter project, though his frame of mind was not altogether satisfactory to its originator, who found that his interest was confined to the political and commercial side of the question.

It would appear from the evidence of contemporary observers that Palmerston's speeches on ecclesiastical and commercial topics were hardly noticed; while his continued hostility to France and the States was the subject of a good deal of comment, and his possible return to the Foreign Office of a good deal of apprehension. That prospect seems also to have alarmed his nominal friends, the Whigs, quite as much as his opponents. There was a decided anti-Palmerstonian feeling among the party and at Court, which found powerful expression when, on Peel's resignation in 1845, Lord John Russell attempted to form a government. The Queen was much alarmed, and expressed her earnest desire that Palmerston should take the Colonial Office; but Lord John found him determined to be the director of Foreign Affairs or no minister at all. The present Lord Grey, then better known as Lord Howick, was even more adverse to Palmerston than

her Majesty, and positively declined to be a member of the same Cabinet with him.

I could not [Lord Grey afterwards wrote to Lord John by way of explanation] be blind to the notorious fact that, justly or unjustly, both friends and opponents regarded with considerable apprehension the prospect of his return to the Foreign Office, and the existence of such a feeling was, in my mind, no slight objection to the appointment. But, further, when he formerly held this office, events occurred which were by no means yet forgotten, which have created feelings of apparent alienation between him and some of the chief statesmen and diplomats of foreign countries, more especially of France.

It is well known that Lord John, bewildered by the difficulties of reconciling conflicting claims, and annoyed at the impossibility of extracting from Peel any specific pledges of support, seized Lord Grey's refusal to serve with Palmerston as a pretext for abandoning the attempt to form a ministry, and the Whigs were condemned to a further period of opposition.

When, however, Peel was finally overthrown in the following year, there was no opposition to Palmerston's return to the Foreign Office for the third time. According to Greville, Lord John undertook to control him, and to secure the Cabinet against the consequences of his imprudence. It is also to be remarked that the settlement of the Oregon boundary question had removed all danger of a rupture with the United States, while Palmerston had shortly before taken the prudent course of paying a visit of reconciliation to Paris, which to all appearance was a complete success. While at Paris he seized the opportunity of an abortive attempt on the life of Louis Philippe to hold out the olive branch in the shape of a letter of congratulation, the general effect of which upon French public opinion was all that could be desired.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE SPANISH MARRIAGES.

1846.

Earlier stages of the negotiations—Louis Philippe's first condition—The agreement of Eu—The Coburg candidate—Guizot's change of attitude—Lord Palmerston's despatch—Its results—Announcement of the marriages—Palmerston's efforts to postpone them.

THOUGH Lord Palmerston had apparently won all hearts during his visit to Paris, it soon appeared that he had only effected a momentary reconciliation with Louis Philippe and Guizot. This was but natural. They could hardly fail to fear and suspect the statesman who had so completely ruined their Egyptian policy in the past; and who was pretty sure in the future to treat certain matrimonial schemes which they were pushing forward in Spain, in a very different spirit to that in which they had been regarded by the pacific Aberdeen. It is unnecessary to discuss at any length the earlier stages of the Spanish marriages. The first conclusion arrived at was this:—When the Regent Christina proposed that her daughter Isabella should marry a French prince, Louis Philippe declined the proposal from fear of the jealousy

of England ; but at the same time insisted that the choice of the Queen of Spain must exclude a member of the reigning families of Europe, and must be confined to the Spanish Bourbons. The Bourbon candidates ultimately resolved themselves into Isabella's cousins, the sons of her uncle Don Francisco de Paula. But both of them were disliked by Christina, especially the younger, Enrique, who had taken part in Progressist intrigues, and had been sent into exile. The elder brother, Francisco, Duke of Cadiz, was politically less objectionable ; but he was notoriously effeminate, according to Christina, "not a man," and Palmerston afterwards termed him "an absolute and Absolutist fool." Isabella was known to contemplate the idea of marrying him with the utmost repugnance. Aberdeen thought that Don Enrique was the less objectionable of the two ; but he informed the Spanish ambassador that "if it should be found that no descendant of Philip V. can safely be chosen . . . it would be no cause of displeasure to Great Britain if they (the Spanish Government) were to select a prince from some other family."

Lord Aberdeen's conduct, if somewhat unnecessarily yielding, was, at any rate, in the highest degree straightforward, and so far the conduct of Guizot and his master had been quite above-board. But in 1845 it appeared that, although the French Court had no wish for a marriage between the Queen of Spain and one of the Orleanist princes, they were most anxious to secure her sister and heiress for Louis Philippe's youngest son the Duc de Montpensier. This step looked very much like an attempt to secure the Spanish throne *par un détour.*\* But Guizot denied emphatically that there

\* Guizot's expression to M. Bresson, the French Minister at Madrid.

was any hidden end in view ; and on the occasion of the Queen's visit to Louis Philippe at Eu in September of that year, he voluntarily promised Aberdeen that " the Montpensier match should not be proceeded with until it was no longer a political question, which would be when the Queen was married and had children."

How far Louis Philippe and his Minister would have kept faith with Aberdeen if the eligible Bourbon had been forthcoming for Isabella, it is unnecessary to enquire. At the same time, it is only just to say that they gave some indication to the English minister of their contemplated *volte-face*. On the 27th of February, 1846, a memorandum was written by Guizot to be shown to Aberdeen, in which it was declared that if the marriage either of the Queen or of the Infanta to a prince who was not a descendant of Philip V. became "probable and imminent," France would consider herself free from her engagements, and at liberty to demand the hand of the Queen or of the Infanta for the Duc de Montpensier. Upon this memorandum Guizot laid considerable stress when afterwards accused of underhand conduct. But it should be observed that the language was studiously vague, France being left sole judge of the "probability and imminence," and that the memorandum was only read to Aberdeen. No copy of the document was left with him, and so little importance did he attach to it, that he said nothing about it to Mr. Bulwer, our minister at Madrid, or to his own successor, Lord Palmerston. Now, the candidate other than a Bourbon alluded to in the memorandum was Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. Louis Philippe affected to be greatly afraid of him on account of his family connections ; his brother was King of Portugal, and his cousin Prince

Consort of England. Aberdeen, however, did his very utmost to calm his susceptibilities on the point. He actually acquainted Guizot with the fact that Christina, not for the first time, was trying to secure Prince Leopold for her daughter, and had even made a formal offer to Leopold's father through Mr. Bulwer; and he sent the most ample assurance to Guizot that the English Court would give no support to the candidature.

It appears incredible that Louis Philippe can ever have considered the Coburg marriage as really "imminent," and it is difficult to see that any real excuse can be made for the complete change of attitude adopted by the King and Minister almost simultaneously with the formation of Lord John Russell's Ministry. The condition that the Montpensier marriage should not take place until Isabella had had children was allowed to drop out of sight altogether, and it was determined that the luckless Queen should marry the *cretin* Don Francisco. It is true that the turpitude of the two conspirators was not as black as it has sometimes been represented. Francisco was practically the only Bourbon left, as far as they were concerned, his brother being intimately connected with the anti-French party; and the fact that for many months they had actively supported another candidature, Count Trapani, is inconsistent with the charge commonly brought against them, that their idea was to force the Queen to marry an incompetent husband so as to place Montpensier on the throne *par un détour*. Towards the English Government, however, they acted with the grossest treachery. When Bresson, the French Minister at Madrid, acting on his own responsibility, obtained on the 12th of July Christina's consent to the Cadiz alliance on condition that the Infanta should simultaneously marry the Due

de Montpensier, he was rebuked, and apparently disavowed, but only on the ground of *simultanéité*.\* As Guizot subsequently pointed out to his master, Christina would only accept Cadiz with Montpensier for a pendant; and to ensure success, it must be understood that as soon as one marriage was completed, the second must be discussed and arranged.

It is clear, then, that Louis Philippe and Guizot had resolved to depart from the agreement of Eu *before* they were acquainted with the "astonishing and detestable despatch" of Lord Palmerston, which they afterwards alleged as the cause of their change of plan and the simultaneous celebration of the Cadiz and Montpensier marriages, with terrible consequences to the unhappy Isabella and still more unhappy Spain. That despatch was dated July 18th, 1846, and explained to Mr. Bulwer the views of the new Government on the double question of the marriage of the Queen and the political condition of Spain.

In regard to the first [he wrote], I have not at present any instructions to give you in addition to those which you have received from my predecessor in office. The choice of a husband for the Queen of an independent country is obviously a matter in which the Governments of other countries are not entitled to interfere unless there should be a probability that the choice would fall upon some prince . . . directly belonging to the reigning family of some foreign state. But there is no person of this description among those who are named as candidates for the Queen of Spain; those candidates being reduced to three, namely, the Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, and the two sons of Don Francisco de Paula. . . . As between the three candidates above mentioned, Her Majesty's Government have only to express their sincere wish that the choice may fall upon the one who

\* This point appears to be overlooked by Mr. Spencer Walpole in his otherwise well-considered defence of Louis Philippe and Guizot, but it comes out very clearly in the letters between the two published after 1848 in the *Revue Retrospective*.

may be most likely to secure the happiness of the Queen and to promote the welfare of the nation.

The second part of the despatch was a vigorous onslaught on the Spanish Government in true Palmerstonian style; it was one of absolutism, force, and tyranny, a mockery of constitutionalism, and so forth. Bulwer, however, was told in conclusion that

Her Majesty's Government are so sensible of the inconvenience of interfering, even by friendly advice, in the internal affairs of independent States, that I have to abstain from giving you instructions to make any representations whatever to the Spanish Minister on these matters; but though you will, of course, take care to express on no occasion on these subjects sentiments different from those which I have thus explained to you, and although you will be careful not to express these sentiments in any manner, or upon any other occasion, so as to be likely to create, increase, or encourage discontent, yet you need not conceal from any of those persons who may have the power of remedying the existing evils, the fact that such opinions are entertained by the British Government.

Of this despatch, Palmerston, who seems to have gathered from Lord Aberdeen no idea that the marriage question was at all serious, rather imprudently gave a copy to Jarnac, the French Ambassador, and at once set the French and Spanish Courts ablaze. Christina saw in it a design to effect a revolution in Spain which would overthrow the Moderado Ministry, and surround her with the leaders of the Progressist party, Espartero, Olozaga, and the rest, who had already driven her from Madrid, and would probably try to expel her again. There can be no doubt also that Louis Philippe and Guizot were seriously alarmed for the moment; the language of the latter to Greville on the occasion of his visit to Paris proves that real alarm was mingled with his hypocrisy. From the day of Palmerston's arrival at the Foreign Office they

had been shaking in their shoes, and it was in vain that the Minister attempted to keep up the King's spirits by assurances that "les *prospects* du cabinet Whig sont bien *gloomy*." Themselves conspirators against the agreement of Eu, they were inclined to suspect a countermine at every turn. It was certainly rather rash of Palmerston to mention the Coburg prince as if his chances were equal to those of the sons of Don Francisco de Paula, and it gave Guizot a certain handle for his contention that Palmerston intended to depart from the engagement with Aberdeen. *Pourquoi nommer le Coburg?*" asked Madame de Lieven of Greville after all was over; and to confirm Guizot's suspicions, Jarnac's letter arrived at Paris about the same time as a mission from Christina, the object of which was to effect a retreat from the Cadiz arrangement, and obtain for Spain the French King's permission to choose a king for herself. At the same time the mere mention of the Coburg marriage could not be said, even by the most extreme alarmist, to render it "imminent," and a categorical demand for an explanation would have immediately dissolved his fears. As Queen Victoria pointed out in the crushing rebuke—a "twister," her Foreign Secretary admiringly called it—which she afterwards addressed to the French Court through the Queen of the Belgians, Lord Palmerston mentioned Leopold among the candidates *merely* as a fact known to Europe; and he referred Bulwer to the last instructions which he had received from Lord Aberdeen:—

In which, in terms most explicit and most positive, he asserts the in controvertible right of the Queen of Spain to marry what prince she pleases, even although he should not be a descendant of Philip V., adding, at the same time, what I give in his own words: "that we ventured, although without any English candidate or English pre-

ference, to point out Don Enrique as the prince who appeared to us the most eligible, because the most likely to prove acceptable to the people of Spain."

Greville's conclusion was that the mischief had arisen from Palmerston being careless and thoughtless, Guizot suspicious and alarmed. The Foreign Secretary was certainly rather careless, and perhaps not sufficiently awake to the importance of the Spanish marriage question, but he was also overwhelmed with business on entering into office. But the month's delay which occurred between the general demand on the part of Guizot for an exposition of the English policy and Palmerston's reply was undoubtedly most unfortunate, and tended to give further colour to his suspicions. There can be no doubt that they were quite baseless as far as the Coburg marriage was concerned. Palmerston's only reason for advocating that alliance was, as he characteristically wrote to Bulwer, that "the English Government would see with pleasure a good cross introduced into the family of Spain;" on the whole he thought, considering the average of intellect in his father, brother, and sister, that the chances were against Leopold being anything remarkable. The prince whom he really wished to see on the throne of Spain was Enrique, of whose abilities he seems to have formed a very exaggerated opinion, and who was very acceptable on account of his Progressist leanings.

Upon the best of consideration we can give to the matter [he wrote to Bulwer] and according to the information which we hitherto possess, we think it best for all parties concerned that Enrique should marry the Queen, and that Coburg should marry the Infanta; and that is the arrangement we wish you to try for.

Upon the question of the Montpensier marriage, however, even when safeguarded by the conditions

into which Guizot had voluntarily entered at Eu, it appeared that Palmerston, instead of being neutral like Aberdeen, was most emphatically hostile.

The language I hold to Jarnac [he tells Bulwer] is purposely general and applicable to Montpensier's marriage with the Infanta as well as with the Queen. I tell him that it is a great and paramount object with us that Spain should be independent, and that her policy should be founded upon Spanish and not upon French considerations ; so that if ever we should have the misfortune of finding ourselves engaged in war with France, we should not merely on that account, and without any separate quarrel with Spain, find ourselves involved in war with Spain also. That this independence of Spain would be endangered, if not destroyed, by the marriage of a French prince into the royal family of Spain ; and that as, on the one hand, France would be entitled to object to such a marriage being contracted by an English prince, so England is entitled to object to such a marriage being contracted by a French one. That such an objection on our part may seem uncourteous, and may be displeasing ; but that the friendships of States and Governments must be founded upon natural interest, and not upon personal likings.

After this decided harangue, it was absurd for Guizot to complain, as he subsequently did, that he had been kept in ignorance of the strong objections of the English Government to the Montpensier marriage. His game, as time went on, evidently was to use the Coburg scare as an excuse for hastening on the simultaneous marriages of Cadiz to the Queen, and Montpensier to the Infanta *coûte que coûte*. Indeed, his own panic does not seem to have lasted more than three or four days ; for as early as July 31st he had come to the conclusion that neither the English Cabinet nor Palmerston himself had any serious projects for a Coburg, and in the following month the unconditional refusal of the Coburg family to accept Christina's proposal was actually sent to Madrid. While Palmerston was playing for the Enrique and Coburg combination with his cards

on the table, Guizot, while artfully pretending to follow his lead, as far as Enrique was concerned, a choice which he mendaciously declared "would be perfectly satisfactory to France," was urging Bresson at Madrid to bring matters to an issue. Christina's remaining scruples were removed by her fears of "the English and the Revolution," and on the 2nd of September, Jarnac announced to Palmerston that the two marriages of the Queen to Cadiz and her sister to Montpensier, had been arranged on the 28th of August.

The indignation entertained by the English Court and the English Ministry against the pair of tricksters who had deliberately broken their word, and that to further projects which, under the most favourable construction, were those of sordid fortune-hunters, was expressed without much circumlocution: "Je ne vous parlerai plus d'entente cordiale," wrote Palmerston to Jarnac, "parce-que ce qu'on nous annonce par rapport aux affaires d'Espagne ne nous prouve que trop clairement qu'on ne veut plus à Paris ni de cordialité ni d'entente." "If this marriage takes place," he wrote later on, "it will be the first time that the promises and declarations of a French king are not realised." His royal mistress was, as we have seen, quite as outspoken, and vigorously denied Louis Philippe's insinuation that she looked at these affairs only through the medium of Lord Palmerston. Even Metternich was disgusted.

Tell M. Guizot from me [he said] that one does not with impunity play little tricks with great countries. He knows I do not think much of public opinion, it is not one of my instruments, but it has its effect. The English Government have done their best to establish Louis Philippe in public opinion. They can withdraw what they gave, and I have always said the moment he loses that he is on the verge of a war, and his is not a dynasty that can stand a war.

This stern warning had no effect ; indeed, Guizot had gone too far for retreat to be possible. Still less efficacious were the makeshifts devised by Palmerston's nimble mind to secure the defeat, or, at least, the postponement of the scheme. In a vigorous protest against the marriage he appealed to the treaty of Utrecht, but arguments based on what had occurred in the reign of Queen Anne naturally appeared to Guizot to be "old and strange," and the Duke of Wellington pronounced them to be "damned stuff." Equally futile was his plan for re-establishing the Salic law against the children of the Montpensier marriage. Considering that Isabella reigned solely through the abrogation of that ordinance, there would have been, as Greville says, much levity in re-establishing it against her sister. His machinations for a divorce were equally futile. Possibly his designs for stirring up an agitation in Spain through Bulwer, "of course avoiding schemes for insurrection," might have had more effect if time had been allowed for their development. Events, however, moved too quickly for him ; the marriages were celebrated on the 10th of October, and the French claimed the game. It remained for Palmerston to show them that it was not worth the candle.

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## CHAPTER VII.

## YEARS OF REVOLUTION.

1846-1849.

Results of the Spanish marriages—The annexation of Cracow—Civil war in Portugal—Lord Palmerston's policy—Termination of the struggle—The Swiss Sonderbund—Lord Palmerston's despatch—Settlement of the dispute—Constitutionalism in Italy—The Minto Mission—The fall of Louis Philippe—The Spanish despatch—Lord Palmerston and the Provisional Government at Paris—Change in his Italian policy—His attitude towards the Sardinian Government—Suppression of the Revolution—Palmerston and Naples—His advice to Austria—The Hungarian refugees.

THOUGH the conclusion of the Spanish marriages was followed by no actual rupture between England and France, the relations between the two countries were cold to the last degree. It was particularly unfortunate that at this crisis England should have been represented at Paris by Lord Normanby, a very *green* ambassador, as Madame de Lieven said, who made matters worse by his social *gaucheries*, and who entered into unwise relations with Thiers, and other leaders of the Opposition. Nor did his chief receive with particularly good grace the advances of the French ambassador, St. Aulaire. “The

thing remained," Lord Palmerston said, "and as long as it did remain there was no civility and no *procédé* which would permanently alter the state of things between England and France." In the end the results of the estrangement were far more serious for France than for England. The Orleanist dynasty had lost its only friend in Europe, and it had been found out. The "matrimonial blockade" established by the autocratic Powers against the upstart family was only the more rigidly enforced on account of the new methods of courtship patented by M. Guizot; and when at last Palmerston's continued efforts on behalf of the oppressed of Europe drove the northern Powers to seek a common basis of action with the French Court, it was too late. An alliance between Austria, Russia, Prussia, and France against England was, if Count d'Haussonville is to be believed,\* to have been concluded in March 1848. But in February the Orleanist dynasty succumbed before the combined effects of its previous isolation abroad, and the fatuity of the *juste milieu* policy at home; and Palmerston could have boasted, with a considerable amount of truth, that he had driven Louis Philippe from the Tuilleries.

The dissolution of the *entente cordiale*, which was fatal to the junior member of the firm, by no means strengthened the position of the other partner. Between the Liberalism of the Russell Ministry and the tottering Conservatism of Metternich a *modus vivendi* was impossible, more especially as the English Foreign Secretary continued to pursue what the Austrian Chancellor termed the "Œolian policy inaugurated by

\* *Histoire de la politique extérieure du Gouvernement Français*, tom. ii. p. 381. It is curious that there is no mention of this agreement in the *Memoirs of Metternich*.

Canning, by giving vigorous support to continental Liberalism. The Austrian Chancellor was not slow to retaliate. By the annexation of the free city of Cracow, the last remnant of independent Poland, to Austria, with the full consent of Prussia and Russia, he dealt a counterblow at Constitutionalism which was for the moment peculiarly effective, though it is inexpedient in the long run for Governments whose chief strength is the *vis inertiae*, to begin to tear up treaties. As Palmerston had pointed out in the House of Commons at the end of the previous session, if the Treaty of Vienna, under which the independence of Cracow had been guaranteed, "was not good on the Vistula, it might be equally invalid on the Rhine and on the Po." The immediate effects of the annexation, however, were to point the moral that while the champions of personal government were apparently united and determined, Constitutionalism was under a cloud. England and France made formal protests against the breach of faith on the part of the northern Powers; but no regard was paid to them, since their separate action only pointed out more clearly than ever that there was no possibility of their coming together, and that the protests were really addressed, not to Vienna, but by way of apology for what could not be prevented, to the constituencies at home. A second attack on the annexation of Cracow was made in the Queen's Speech of January 1847, but Palmerston took little by it, as the three Powers made a very effective rejoinder by directing their ambassadors to stay away from the House of Lords.

Palmerston bore the reverse with great philosophy. "Even if France and England had been on good terms," he wrote to Lord Normanby, "they have no

means of action on the spot in question, and could only have prevented the thing by a threat of war, which, however, the three Powers would have known we should never utter for the sake of Cracow." The temporary check, indeed, seems only to have inspired him with new funds of confidence, and during the months that preceded the cataclysm of 1848, his diplomatic activity was phenomenal, even for "the accursed Palmerston," who haunted the pillows of German statesmen. His hand was everywhere, "getting the affairs of Europe into trim," as he called it; and, of course, he was particularly active in the Iberian peninsula, where he had a prescriptive right to interfere. Palmerston's Quadruple Treaty had placed Donna Maria on the throne of Portugal, and two years later she was provided with a Coburg husband by old Stockmar. The marriage was a happy one, but the young Prince was unpopular with the Portuguese, chiefly because they regarded him as a puppet in the hands of his factotum Dietz, whom, unwarned by the experiences of King Otho at Athens, he had brought with him to Lisbon. Opposition in Portugal took the form, not of votes of censure, but of street fighting, and Radicalism, getting the upper hand, forced upon the Court a democratic constitution. The natural result was that Donna Maria became confirmedly absolutist, and all influence passed into the hands of a clique known as the Camarilla, in which the obnoxious Dietz was suspected of playing a prominent part. Opportunity for action was found by the Court party in outbreaks which occurred in 1846, and Count Saldanha was the willing instrument of a *coup d'état* which closed the Cortes and established a state of siege in the capital. Constitutionalism found refuge, as on previous occasions, at Oporto, a leader in Count das

Antas, and once more Portugal became a prey to civil war.

There was little dignity in the struggle, and the ridiculous would have been its most prominent feature, were it not for the fact that the “swell-mob riots”—to use Palmerston’s apt definition—were rapidly ruining the country. Of course, the Court party, by essaying a counter-revolution, had put itself completely in the wrong; the cabal had no hold on the country, and could not even justify its existence by success. On the other hand, the Das Antas Junta was evidently animated by faction rather than patriotism; it did not hesitate to make common cause with the resuscitated Miguelite party, to threaten Donna Maria with the fate of Louis XVI., to vie with the Camarilla in the barbarity of its methods of war. It was evidently not desirable that the dynasty should be upset for the sake of a gang of adventurers. That was Palmerston’s view, and he offered to negotiate between the two parties, but only on condition that Donna Maria would put her house in order. The well-meaning attempt failed completely. Palmerston’s envoy, Colonel Wylde, could not get a hearing at Oporto, and it was evident that the insurgents, who believed themselves to be on the eve of victory, were not going to surrender to arguments. Equally clear was it that the Camarilla were looking to foreign intervention as the means for securing themselves in power. Their overtures were favourably received by the Spanish Government, which saw that the revival of Miguelism in one part of the Peninsula would be followed by that of Carlism in the other; and by France, where Guizot was anxious to recover his lost prestige by any action, however inconsiderate. Palmerston was the last person to allow the superior

activity of a rival to deprive him of the supreme influence in the Peninsula which he had acquired by the masterstroke of 1834, especially as that intervention would certainly have resulted in the restoration of a despotic form of government. Hitherto he had agreed that the Quadruple Treaty did not apply, inasmuch as the present quarrel was one, not of dynasties, but of parties, and therefore a matter which the Portuguese should be left to settle by themselves. He still maintained that reasoning, but adroitly excused his change of policy by laying stress on the hopelessness of terminating the war through the obstinacy of Saldanha on the one side, and Das Antas on the other, while he anticipated France and Spain by himself taking the initiative. If there was no prospect of a compromise, he promised Donna Maria to "concert with the Governments of France and Spain" as to the best means of affording her effectual assistance, on condition that she would agree to (1) a full and general amnesty, (2) the revocation of all decrees passed since the *coup d'état*, (3) a general election and the convocation of the Cortes, (4) the formation of a neutral ministry in place of the Camarilla.

Immediate and complete success followed this bold change of front. Donna Maria found it advisable to sacrifice Saldanha to Palmerston, much as Louis Philippe had sacrificed Thiers in 1840. The Oporto Junta gave England and Spain the trouble of sending a fleet and an army respectively to the scene of operations before it collapsed. Civil war came to an end, and Palmerston could boast with reason that he had "saved the Portuguese Crown without oppressing the Portuguese people, by transferring the struggle from the field of battle to the arena of Parliamentary debate." It was not long before he could report that Constitutionalism

was working most satisfactorily in Portugal. Palmerston, the peace-maker, was, however, attacked from both sides of the House of Commons, by Hume and the Radicals, on the pedantic ground that he had departed from the Liberal doctrine of non-intervention in internal affairs, by Lord George Bentinck and the Protectionists, who retained a sneaking affection for Dom Miguel. Lord Stanley took up the matter in the Upper House, and so serious was the crisis, that Lord John Russell wrote to the Queen that the days of his ministry were numbered. Peel, however, came to the rescue ; the attack resolved itself into some most unjust aspersions on Colonel Wylde, who had the misfortune to be attached to the Prince Consort's suite, and was therefore supposed to have acted in Coburg interests ; and Lord George Bentinck, not feeling sure of a majority, allowed the House to be counted out before Palmerston had opened his mouth. Great was the astonishment in the House of Lords, where the discussion also collapsed, and ministers found themselves in possession of an unexpected majority of twenty.

The English intervention in Portugal would probably have evoked some token of displeasure from Metternich, had it not been that his attention was concentrated on the affairs of Switzerland. There, though he was unaware of the fact, his system was on its trial, and its inability to contend with the spirit of the time was a sign of weakness which the revolutionary party turned to account throughout Europe in the following year. It was a very confused struggle that was threatening to destroy the congeries of peoples and languages which had organized itself into an inharmonious whole among the mountains. But two facts seem to be beyond dispute, that in the religious disputes between

the Protestant and Catholic cantons, the latter were the aggressors, and that the decree for the expulsion of the Jesuits passed by the Protestant majority in the Swiss Diet was really an act of self-defence; secondly, that when the Catholic cantons, instead of submitting to the vote of the majority, seceded from the Confederation, and formed a Sonderbund or league of their own, they were putting themselves outside the law of the land. "No alliances," ran the sixth article of the Swiss constitution, "shall be formed by the cantons among each other, prejudicial either to the general confederacy or to the rights of other cantons"; and Metternich would have done well to hesitate before he gave the support of his authority to a course which, though professedly Catholic and Conservative, was separatist, and therefore, in reality, revolutionary, according to his theory of politics. It was a strange contradiction to find Austria, the ruler over millions of unrepresented aliens, supporting the principle of cantonal sovereignty in Switzerland, declaring that the action of the Sonderbund had dissolved the Diet, and demanding the joint intervention of the Powers. Even Guizot seems to have been in some degree sensible of the perplexities in which the Powers were likely to be involved through Metternich's unswerving confidence in the sanctity and unchangeableness of political phraseology, and his terror of the Radical spectre. Though willing to agree to the eventual dissolution of the Confederation, Guizot wished first to invoke the arbitration of the Pope for the settlement of the religious dispute, and a conference of ambassadors for the modification of the Federal compact. Even so, the destruction of the Swiss Confederacy was only removed by one degree, for French and Austrian sympathy was wholly on the side of the Sonderbund; and there was in

addition the prospect of a European quarrel over the destiny of Switzerland, as was afterwards the case with Schleswig-Holstein.

The despatch by which Palmerston averted immediate intervention was a diplomatic masterpiece, though amusingly inconsistent with his proceedings in Portugal. Its burden throughout was the blessedness of peace and the danger of interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

Her Majesty's Government, he declared, could not go to the length of thinking that either the formation of the Sonderbund, or the appeal which the seven Cantons composing it have made to foreign Powers, or the civil war which has broken out, can entitle the Powers of Europe to consider the Swiss Confederation as dissolved, and to declare themselves released from their engagements towards that Confederation.

Mediation might be offered, but for it to be successful, it was desirable that the five Powers should come to an understanding among themselves: Her Majesty's Government, therefore, would suggest that the basis of the arrangement to be proposed by the five Powers to the contending parties in Switzerland should be the removal of the Jesuits. This would abolish the practical grievance of the Diet, the Sonderbund was to be conciliated by the assertion of the principle of cantonal sovereignty, and that declaration having been made by the Diet, the seven seceding cantons could no longer have any pretence whatever for continuing that union which was called the Sonderbund. Even if mediation failed, the British Government declined to be a party to armed interference in the affairs of Switzerland, and wished the functions of the mediating Conference to be confined to the settlement of present differences:—

The constitution of the Confederation provides the means for making such improvements as circumstances and the altered state of things may from time to time render expedient in the Federal compact; and such matters do not appear to Her Majesty's Government to require the intervention of Foreign Powers.

The effect of Palmerston's proposals would simply have been to decide every point under dispute in favour of the Diet, and there was a touch of the sublime in his suggestion that the Conference should look upon the expulsion of the Jesuits, the principal question at issue, as settled without discussion. The real truth was that Palmerston was simply playing out diplomatic rope in order to gain time. It mattered little to him that England was completely isolated for the moment; there was no real cohesion between France and Austria, and but little chance of Guizot's being able to avenge the moral defeat of France on the Syrian question by excluding England from the settlement or unsettlement of Switzerland. The promptitude with which General Dufour brought the military operations ordered by the Diet against the Sonderbund to a successful conclusion,\* and the moderation which the Diet displayed in the moment of victory, deprived Metternich of all excuse for mediation; and having egged on the secession of the Sonderbund, he had to sit by and witness its extinction. The conduct of Palmerston attracted but little attention at the time; but there can be no doubt that Switzerland owed its continued independence to his refusal to join in coercive measures against a law-abiding majority, and in favour of a faction.

The revolutionary principle which had showed itself

\* It was strongly suspected that Mr. Peel, our consul at Lucerne, advised General Dufour to hasten his operations, but Palmerston afterwards denied that he had written a single syllable that could justify such a message.

in clerical garb in Switzerland\* was raising its voice throughout Italy during these months of anticipation and fear with considerably greater vehemence, and in Italy, as in Switzerland, Metternich and Palmerston found themselves in direct antagonism. Metternich was determined upon the blind repression of all movements that could be construed into efforts for the promotion of Italian unity. "Italy was," according to his famous apothegm, to remain "a geographical expression"; no departure could be permitted from the state of affairs established by the Treaty of Vienna, a quarter of a century before; and he saw in the tardy efforts of Carlo Alberto of Savoy, the Arch-duke of Tuscany, and the newly-elected Pope Pio Nono, to liberalise their institutions, the approaching end of the Austrian rule throughout the Peninsula. Palmerston, more truly Conservative, thought that reform was not necessarily identical with revolution; though the direction of affairs was fast slipping from their hands, he held that the Italian princes might possibly save themselves even yet by timely and sincere concessions, and he sent warning to Austria that she must abandon all idea of making any reforms that the Italian States might adopt a pretext for invading their territories. The Italian question was one of European importance. "Italy," he wrote to Lord John Russell, soon after his return to the Foreign Office, "is the weak part of Europe, and the

\* Count Beust, in his memoirs, has pointed out with admirable force that while the Revolution of July was purely French in its origin, that of February was European. "The true date of its commencement," he says, "is not 1848 but 1847. In that year the feebleness of the great Governments became apparent to the European party of agitation, and from that moment the first trivial cause (such as the Parisian conflict really was) sufficed for its outbreak. *Memoirs* (Eng. trans.), vol. i. pp. 43-44.

next war that breaks out in Europe will probably arise out of Italian affairs. . . . Leave things as they are, and you leave France the power of disturbing the peace of Europe whenever she chooses." That his prophecy of French intervention was not fulfilled to the letter, and that the Crimean war anticipated that of Italian liberation, is no real argument against its wisdom. For Lamartine in 1848 would certainly, if he could, have antedated the events of 1859, and actually offered assistance to the insurgents. Whether at this juncture the mission of Lord Minto to Italy with the view of strengthening by seasonable advice the feeble knees of the princes in their progress along the paths of constitutional government, was a particularly wise step may perhaps be doubted. Mr. Disraeli's sneer at the despatch of a British agent "to teach politics in the country where Machiavelli was born," was perhaps hardly to the point, because the petty despots of the Italian Peninsula were very feeble imitations of the ideal Prince of the great Florentine, even in their vices. But the Minto mission should have started two years earlier, if it wished to be successful. In 1847, while it contended fruitlessly with the animosity of Austria, and the insincerity of the pretended reformers, its presence was turned by the Young Italy party into a pretext for renewed agitation. The revolutionary outburst in Sicily, followed by the general upheaval of Italy against Austria and her puppets, showed that affairs had passed beyond the stage in which platonic advice was of avail; that it was too late, to quote a phrase used later by Mr. Disraeli, to try "to found in Italy a Whig party, a sort of Brooks's club at Florence." But there is no reason to consider the Minto mission other than a perfectly honest attempt to save the Aus-

trian empire in Italy in spite of itself. For to Lord Palmerston, as to the rest of the world, the programme of Young Italy seemed totally incapable of execution.

France, however, not Italy, as Lord Palmerston had expected, was the site of the first revolutionary victories; but they soon ran their course over Europe, driving Louis Philippe from the Tuileries, Metternich from Vienna, and shipwrecking autocracy at Berlin. England may then be said to have become by force of circumstances the arbiter of the destinies of the continent. Little Belgium alone rode the gale by her side, and by every post, as Palmerston wrote to Lord Normanby, a lamenting Minister threw himself and his country upon England for help. It is a remarkable proof of how strong was the element of common sense in Palmerston's character, that he refrained, with one or two possible exceptions, from injudicious action, and left the Powers to put their houses in order as best they could without attempting to interfere with their arrangements. The most striking exception was in the case of Spain, whither Palmerston thought it advisable to send a lecture on constitutional government, which, though sound in argument, and justified to a certain extent by the semi-domestic relations established between England and Isabella by the Quadruple alliance, was decidedly too peremptory in tone. The Queen of Spain was informed that she "would act wisely in the present critical state of affairs if she was to strengthen her executive government by widening the bases on which the administration reposes, and in calling to her counsels some of the men in whom the Liberal party reposed confidence." The Queen of Spain retaliated by returning the despatch, and, after a heated controversy, by ordering our minister, Sir Henry Bulwer, to quit the

kingdom within forty-eight hours, and Palmerston was powerless to avenge the insult which his inconsiderate zeal had brought on England. It seems that the despatch was sent in direct defiance of Lord John Russell's directions, and the Ministry was naturally not sorry to retaliate on their headstrong colleague by refusing to support his proposals for the coercion of the Spanish Government.

Otherwise, his conduct of affairs was thoroughly pacific and sane. It was not in human nature for the Foreign Secretary to refrain from expressing satisfaction at the overthrow of Louis Philippe; but no trace of malignancy is to be found in his satisfaction, and his hospitable doors were thrown open to the fallen Guizot. To Lamartine, whose splendid efforts as head of the Provisional Government at Paris against socialism and anarchy were attracting the admiration of Europe, he held out the right hand of fellowship. Lord Normanby was directed to remain at his post; and was told that whatever rule possessed prospect of permanency, would be acknowledged by the British Government. In the same spirit our ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna were directed to use their influence to prevent the German Powers from attacking France. "For the present," Palmerston wrote to Lord Ponsonby, "the only chance for tranquillity and order in France, and for peace in Europe, is to give support to Lamartine. I am convinced the French Government will not be aggressive if left alone; and it is to be hoped that Apponyi (the Austrian ambassador) and others will be allowed to remain in Paris till things take a decided turn. If a republic is decidedly established, the other Powers of Europe must, of course, give credentials addressed to that Government, or they will have to give billets to

its troops." Not even Lamartine's circular, declaring that the treaties of 1815 had ceased to exist, could frighten Palmerston out of his confidence in the high-minded orator; he saw in it a mere paper concession to the French war party, and Lamartine's cold reception of Smith O'Brien's deputation confirmed his good opinion of the intentions of the French Provisional Government.

Palmerston's Italian policy naturally changed with the times. With the Austrian provinces of Italy in full revolt, it was impossible to keep to the programme of the Minto mission. Even the sovereigns whose laggard steps the Foreign Secretary had attempted to quicken, had severed themselves from the Austrian connection; and whether from dynastic ambition as in the case of Carlo Alberto, or from prudential motives as that of Tuscany and Naples, were sending troops to the aid of Lombardy and Venetia. Palmerston thought, under the circumstances, that the Austrian rule, south of the Alps, must come to an end, and the Sardinian dynasty take its place. "Northern Italy," he wrote to Lord Minto, "will henceforward be Italian, and the Austrian frontier will be at the Tyrol. . . . Of course, Parma and Modena will follow the example, and in this way the King, no longer of Sardinia, but of Northern Italy, will become a sovereign of some importance in Europe. This will make a league between him and the other Italian rulers still more desirable, and much more feasible. Italy ought to unite in a confederacy similar to that of Germany, commercial and political, and now is the time to strike while the iron is hot." No very ambitious scheme this, and certainly falling far short of the dreams of Mazzini and Young Italy, since it left Florence to the Medici, Naples to the Bourbons, the

Papal States to ecclesiastical misgovernment. Perhaps Palmerston felt that the important point for the moment was to secure the freedom of North Italy, that with the Hapsburgs gone, the Bourbons and their kind must follow. Anyhow, when the old Austrian commander Radetsky was compelled to retire from Milan, and take refuge in the Quadrilateral fortresses behind the Mincio, with Venice triumphant in his rear, it seemed as if Italy, to use the phrase afterwards made by Napoleon III., would be free from the Alps to the Adriatic.

The temptation to throw the military strength of England into the scale was possibly considerable with the Foreign Secretary; but the Austrian sympathies of the Court, the Conservative party, and a not inconsiderable section of the Whigs, were far too vehement to warrant such an undertaking, and Palmerston had to be content with that position of "judicious bottle-holder" which he afterwards described himself as having taken up with regard to the Hungarian insurgents. Carlo Alberto was told that "he was engaged in a struggle of doubtful result, and that the principle upon which it was commenced was full of danger;" but Austria was informed again and again that "things had gone much too far to admit of any future connection" between the Italians and herself. In the actual result his anticipations proved far too sanguine. The recuperative power of Austria was greater than Europe imagined; and the want of cohesion among the Italians, on account of the treachery of the King of Naples, the insincerity of the Pope, the deep-rooted antipathy of the republican party to the Sardinian dynasty, the inability of Carlo Alberto to control the forces he had brought into activity, rendered them impotent to work out their own salvation. French intervention alone could have saved Italy after

Radetzky had stamped out the insurrection in Venetia, and by that time the turbulence of Paris had compelled the substitution at the head of affairs of the unimaginative Cavaignac for the cosmopolitan Lamartine.

Perhaps Lord Palmerston ought to have foreseen the fatal consequences of Italian disunion, but he only erred with the rest of Europe in believing, after the fall of Peschiera, that Carlo Alberto could hold the whole of North Italy, and it is improbable that he could have persuaded the Sardinian Government to accept less terms than the surrender of the whole of Venetia and Lombardy, even if he had wished to do so. There was, too, an insincerity about the Austrian overtures which disgusted both Palmerston and the advisers of Carlo Alberto. It was found that the proposals for an armistice, of which Palmerston consented to be the mouth-piece, were only made to gain time for the advance of Austrian reinforcements, and for attempts to sow dissension between Lombardy and Sardinia. And the maximum of Austrian surrender, the cession of Lombardy minus Venetia, seemed ludicrously inadequate at a moment when everyone expected to hear that Radetzky was in full retreat to the Alps. Things had gone too far, was Palmerston's opinion, and the British Government were unwilling to enter upon a negotiation which, in their opinion, offered no prospects of success; and to make a proposal, which they felt confident beforehand that one of the parties, Sardinia, would positively refuse to accept. He pointed out besides, what subsequent events amply proved to be true, that Austria could only hold Venetia by military occupation pure and simple, and that any possessions south of the Alps must, therefore, be a source of weakness to her rather than of strength. The retort of the Austrians, that

the loss of prestige would be far more serious than the expense of maintaining troops in Italy, was perhaps natural ; and in the impregnable defences of the Quadrilateral, and the Fabian skill of Radetzky, they had ample means for closing the discussion for the time being. Lord Palmerston's attempts to mitigate the punishment of the Italians, when the recapture of Milan proved how completely the tide had turned, and during the cessation of hostilities which preceded the final overthrow of their hopes at Novara, were vigorous, but of course unsuccessful ; and it was left for Napoleon III. and the present Emperor of Germany to accomplish by blood and iron what Palmerston had so nearly effected by diplomacy. The rapture with which the news of the Austrian victory was received at Court and in London society, proved that in his faith in the cause of Italy, Palmerston was in advance of his time by at least a decade. At all events, he had the courage of his opinions.

Yesterday [writes Greville in March 1849] there was a Drawing-room, at which everybody, the Queen included, complimented and wished joy to Colleredo (the Austrian ambassador), except Palmerston, who, though he spoke to him about other things, never alluded to the news that had just arrived from Italy. . . . Nothing could be more striking than this marked difference between the Foreign Secretary and his Sovereign, and all his countrymen, and we may be pretty sure Colleredo will not fail to make a pretty story of it to his Court.

The Foreign Secretary about this period was doomed to witness the temporary overthrow of all his Italian projects. His *protégé*, Pio Nono, proved unsatisfactory ; reforming zeal was evanescent at the Vatican, and the Holy Father was eventually forced by the outbreak of the revolution at Rome to summon French bayonets to support him against his own subjects, whose

sympathies were for a republican form of government. Equally disappointing were Lord Minto's efforts to mediate between the King of Naples and the insurgent Sicilians; the revolt was drowned in blood, and the hideous ferocity of the bombardment of Messina and Palermo gained for Ferdinando the nickname of "Bomba," by which he is chiefly remembered. Unfortunately for himself, Palmerston did not confine his efforts to mediation, but overstepped the limits of friendly neutrality by allowing arms to be supplied to the Sicilian insurgents from the Ordnance—as usual, without informing his colleagues. The matter was taken up by the *Times*, and in the House of Commons, but Palmerston escaped unscathed. He had, it is true, to apologise to Bomba, but apologies never cost him a very violent pang of regret; while Greville was constrained to record the complete success of his answer to Mr. Barker, "a slashing, impudent speech, of sarcasms, jokes, and clap-traps," scarcely deigning to notice the question. A more dignified course of conduct was his remonstrance to the Neapolitan ambassador on the infamous misgovernment disclosed by Mr. Gladstone's famous letters to Lord Aberdeen on the state prisons and state trials of King Bomba's Government. Prince Castelcicala was informed that Mr. Gladstone's letters presented a picture of illegality, injustice, and cruelty, such as might have been hoped would not have existed in any European country. The remonstrance was, however, buried by the Neapolitan ministers until the outcry had passed away, and produced no effect, though Palmerston supplemented it by a fine speech in the House, in which he eulogised Mr. Gladstone's sympathy for the oppressed.

The fulness of time has so amply demonstrated the

justice of Palmerston's contention that the Austrian rule in Italy was an anachronism, and that freedom would certainly be accomplished, if not by the unaided efforts of the Italians, yet certainly through foreign intervention, that to defend it would be a mere waste of words. Italy, as he says in one of his letters to Lord Ponsonby, was to Austria the heel of Achilles, not the shield of Ajax. The Alps were her natural barrier, and her best defence. Palmerston was no enemy to Austria; on the contrary, he wished to see her empire north of the Alps in a condition of strength and prosperity to act as a counterpoise to France. She was "the pivot of the balance of power in Europe." His advice during the crisis was thoroughly sound, and was actually adopted in part. The abdication of the Emperor Ferdinand, "an *implumis bipes*, a Guy Faux, a perfect nullity, next thing to an idiot," as Palmerston rather imprudently styled him in his private letters, was in conformity with his recommendation; and he may be forgiven for not being acquainted with the good qualities of the "lad of sixteen or twenty," Francis Joseph, who mounted the tottering throne in the place of his uncle. And with regard to the revolution in Hungary, his conduct was equally disinterested. The idea of armed intervention was never entertained for a moment, though the sympathies of this country were as active in favour of the Magyars—thanks to the picturesqueness of Kossuth—as they were tepid with regard to the Lombards. He even declined to recognize the insurgents by giving an audience to their representative. At the same time he interceded on their behalf at Vienna; but to his admirable advice Schwarzenberg, the successor of Metternich, turned a deaf ear. In the hour of victory the Austrian Government was urged to make a generous use of the successes

which it had obtained, by restoring to Hungary its due constitutional rights; and Palmerston did not fail to point out that, by calling in Russian aid to crush the rebellion, Austria had set open a door which it might not be easy to shut.\* When the full details of the brutal suppression of the rebellion, the flogging of women and other atrocities, reached England, he allowed his righteous indignation full play; and directed Lord Ponsonby to maintain the dignity and honour of England by expressing openly and decidedly the disgust which such proceedings excited in the public mind.

Though Palmerston's good offices on behalf of Italy and Hungary were of no avail for the time being, the diplomatic campaign against Prince Schwarzenberg closed with a brilliant triumph. After the end of the war, numerous fugitives, among whom were Kossuth and Bem, a Pole who had commanded the Hungarian insurgents with conspicuous success, took refuge in Turkey. The Russian and Austrian ambassadors at Constantinople took upon themselves to demand their surrender, with a threat that if their demands did not receive a categorical answer within a limited time they would suspend diplomatic relations; and their high-handed conduct received the full sanction of their respective Governments, who appealed to loosely-worded treaties extorted from the Porte in former days of humiliation. An immediate surrender would have followed, had not Stratford Canning been at hand to

\* Cobden blamed him for not having sent a vigorous protest against the Russian expedition, and thought that it would have so strengthened the hands of the Russian ministers that the Czar would have countermanded his troops (Morley's *Cobden*, vol. ii. p. 67). The idea that a Czar, especially Nicholas, would allow himself to be swayed by ministerial advice, is one of exquisite simplicity.

inspire the Sultan with a week's resolution ; and Palmerston availed himself of the opportunity with his accustomed skill. Baron Brünnow, the Russian minister in London, was informed before the determination of his Government was known, that the British fleet was to be sent to the Dardanelles—"just as one holds a bottle of salts to the nose of a lady who has been frightened"—remarked the flippant Foreign Secretary ; and the alternatives of the withdrawal of the obnoxious demands, or war, were placed plainly before him and his Austrian colleague. In vain Schwarzenberg attempted to effect a retreat through a back-door, by moderating his demands to a request that the fugitives should be detained by the Porte in the interior of Turkey ; it was incompatible with the dignity of the Sultan, said Palmerston, that he should act as the gaoler of the Emperor of Austria. When, two years later, the Sultan summoned up courage to set Kossuth and his companions free, Palmerston could claim to have won all along the line.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

## PALMERSTON AND THE COUET.

1849—1852.

Independence of Lord Palmerston—Differences of opinion with the Court—The Danish succession question—The Pacifico affair—Breakdown of negotiations—Indignation of France—*Civis Romanus sum*—Effect of the speech—The Queen's Memorandum—The Haynau and Kossuth incidents—The *coup d'état*—Dismissal of Palmerston—Constitutional side of the question—The Militia Bill—The first Derby Ministry.

THOUGH Lord Palmerston's policy since the return of the Whigs to power had been on the whole remarkably sober and sagacious, the Bulwer *fiasco* at Madrid and the Sicilian incident proved that the old Adam of insubordination was not wholly dead within him. Nor were these the only occasions on which, forgetful of the flight of time, he attempted a repetition of the tactics which had been so successful in the good old days of Lord Melbourne, and sent off important despatches without submitting them to Lord John Russell and the Sovereign, or without inserting the alterations which he had been directed to make. And the necessity of coming to a previous understanding

upon important steps was all the greater because the opinions of the Court and the Foreign Secretary were distinctly at issue on many questions of European importance. The sympathies of the Court were with Austria, those of Palmerston with Italy and Hungary, and his views were the wiser of the two; but about North German politics he was rather prejudiced and rather ignorant, yet he paid small attention to the opinions of Prince Albert, who was unquestionably better informed. Among the many wise memoranda which are to be found in Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of Prince Consort*, perhaps the most remarkable are those in which he urged the necessity of German unity under Prussian leadership. Palmerston, though, as can be seen in an interesting letter written by him during a visit to Berlin in 1844, he was not without some insight into the great part that Prussia would some day be called upon to play, cared little for German unity; and while Prince Albert saw in the Zollverein, or customs union, a feeble beginning of a one and undivided Fatherland, Palmerston resented its existence as an arrangement for placing prohibitive duties on British exports.

Indeed, if the Danish succession question may be taken as a test, Palmerston's want of information on the inner workings of Teutonic politics was very considerable. Count Vitzthum, in his memoirs, goes so far as to state that the Foreign Secretary was actuated by personal motives in the matter, his aim being to purchase the non-interference of Baron Brünnow in the Don Pacifico affair by giving Russia a free hand at Copenhagen, and supporting, or at all events acquiescing, in the claims put forward by the Russian dynasty to a portion of the Danish terri-

tory, which included the important harbour of Kiel. Even if this account of the history of the Protocol of July 4th 1850, upon which was based the Treaty of 1852, guaranteeing the crown of Denmark to Prince Christian of Glücksburg, be not accepted as gospel, there can be no doubt that the continued exclusion of Germany from the Baltic by the maintenance of the connection between Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein was far more a matter of interest to Russia than to England. And though there may be some question as to the motives which dictated the arrangement, there can be none as to the carelessness with which it was executed. The choice of the negotiators fell upon a prince who, whatever claims he might have to the throne of Denmark, was regarded by German jurists to have a right to the Duchies inferior to no less than nineteen other members of the house of Schleswig-Holstein. The renunciations of these "agnates" were never obtained, nor was the consent of the Estates of the Duchies. Lastly, though the Duchies were indisputably members of the German Federation, no attempt was made to obtain for the arrangement the sanction of the Federation in its collective form, for Austria and Prussia signed the Protocol not as mandatories of the German Diet, but individually, as great Powers.

It seemed quite on the cards that a trial of strength between the Court and the Foreign Secretary might be averted by the retirement of Lord Palmerston from office, in consequence of a hostile opinion in the House of Commons as to the merits of his treatment of what is generally known as the Don Pacifico affair. Lord Palmerston's defence of the Porte against the menaces of Russia and Austria had been generally approved, but there was naturally some revulsion of public feeling when it was

discovered that the fleet which had been so honourably employed at the Dardanelles was immediately afterwards despatched to coerce the weak little kingdom of Greece for the non-compliance with the demands of the British Government for compensation for various acts of violence committed towards British subjects. There was even a feeling of dismay when the intelligence leaked out that the French Government had actually recalled its Minister, Drouyn de Lhuys, from London, because it believed that his attempts to patch up the dispute between England and Greece had been treated with scanty respect, and that the Russian Government had demanded an explanation of Palmerston's proceedings in rather a serious tone.

Perhaps the points at issue were hardly understood. The seizure of the Greek gunboats and Greek merchantmen by Admiral Parker was regarded as a piece of bullying, by people who argued as if the feebleness of a State was a reason for allowing it to commit crimes with impunity. There was also a disposition to minimise the amount and duration of the wrongs committed, and to overlook the utter impossibility of obtaining redress through the Greek courts of law or by any means short of the employment of force. Because one of the complainants, Don Pacifico, was a Jew adventurer who seized the opportunity to put forward some utterly extortionate claims for compensation, there was no reason why satisfaction should not be exacted for the destruction of his house by an Athenian mob. At any rate, Mr. Finlay, the historian, whose land had been seized by King Otho without a drachma in return, was a perfectly reputable person; and, of the other offences of the Hellenic authorities, the torture of an Ionian who was a British subject, and the arrest of the coxswain and boat's

crew of H.M.S. *Fantôme*, were unquestionably outrages of a very serious nature.

The British case against the disreputable little Greek Government was really perfectly clear, but to apportion the blame for the breakdown of the negotiations was a nicer question. The offer of French mediation was certainly made in good faith, though Palmerston strongly suspected that the intrigues of the French minister at the Greek Court were at the bottom of King Otho's obstinacy. But when Baron Gros, the French Commissioner, arrived at Athens, his proceedings resembled those of an advocate rather than those of an arbitrator; the terms of his settlement were rejected by our ambassador, Mr. Wyse, as inadequate, and he thereupon gave notice that his mission was at an end. Meanwhile, a parallel series of negotiations had been going on in London between Drouyn de Lhuys and Palmerston, which had issue in a convention signed on the 18th which disposed of the whole question under dispute. Intimation of the terms of the proposed arrangement, of which the essential was that if the negotiators at Athens could not agree, they should refer their differences to London, reached Baron Gros on the 24th, and was communicated by him to Mr. Wyse; but the latter, who had received no fresh instructions from London corresponding to those that his French colleague had received from Paris, did not venture to depart from his previous instructions and postpone the employment of force. The embargo was renewed on the 25th, and on the following day the Greek Government submitted unconditionally.

It was but natural that the French Government should feel that they had been treated with disrespect, and resent that treatment accordingly. Drouyn de

Lhuys was recalled from London, and General Lahitte, the French Foreign Minister, openly charged the British Government with duplicity. A dispassionate examination of the whole affair would probably have acquitted Palmerston of a more serious offence than neglect to keep Mr. Wyse constantly and accurately informed on the progress of negotiations in London. But he did not improve matters by trying, in answer to Mr. Milner Gibson, to explain away the recall of Drouyn de Lhuys, who, said he, had gone to Paris "in order personally to be a medium of communication between the two Governments." The excitement was great, though the danger of war was in reality quite remote; many of Palmerston's colleagues were anxious to be rid of him, and the Opposition in the House of Lords seized the opportunity to win a bloodless victory by carrying a hostile resolution on the motion of Lord Stanley by a majority of 27. The Cabinet, after deliberation, decided to stand or fall together, and resolved to cancel the bad effects of the vote in the Upper House, by availing themselves of a resolution of which Mr. Roebuck had given notice—that the principles on which the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government had been regulated had been such as were calculated to maintain the honour and dignity of this country, and in times of unexampled difficulty to preserve peace between England and the various nations of the world.

The debate of four nights which followed was made memorable by the last speech that Sir Robert Peel ever made, by Mr. Cockburn's brilliant "Crown and Anchor" harangue, as Mr. Disraeli termed it, by one of the greatest of Mr. Gladstone's oratorical displays, and by Palmerston's magnificent defence of his policy in a

speech lasting "from the dusk of one day till the dawn of another."\* Of that magnificent specimen of sustained and elaborate argument it is impossible here to give more than a very meagre account. Part of it was a well-considered *apologia pro vita sua*, in which he passed the whole of recent European history before him in skilful review, by a series of graceful transitions from the "sunny plains of Castille and gay vineyards of France" to the "rugged Alps and smiling plains of Lombardy." Incidentally he managed to make a remarkably neat cut at his enemies in Paris, and to those who listened to them in England, by laughing to scorn the idea that the French had driven out M. Guizot at the instigation of a knot of foreign conspirators who were "caballing" against him, "for no other reason than that he upheld, as he conceived, the dignity and interests of his country." On the Greek question his argument was temperate and lucid, except when it concerned the breakdown of the mission of Baron Gros, and there leakages are to be discovered in abundance. But little exception can be taken to his contention that if British subjects could get no redress from foreign courts of law, they were not to be confined to that remedy only, but were entitled to receive the protection of their own Government; or to his arguments that Mr. Finlay had no redress because the Greek revolution of 1843 had thrown a veil over the unconstitutional acts of the Monarchy, and that with respect to Don Pacifico it was impossible to take proceedings against a mob of five hundred persons. The orator brushed aside the flimsy objection that, because

\* The speech I had to make [he wrote to his brother] could not be comprised within a shorter time than from a quarter before ten to twenty minutes past two.

M. Pacifico was a person of doubtful antecedents, he could be maltreated with impunity.

The rights of a man depend on the merits of the particular case; and it is an abuse of argument to say that you are not to give redress to a man because in some former transactions he may have done something which is questionable. Punish him, if you will—punish him if he is guilty, but don't pursue him as a Pariah through life. . . . "Oh, but," it is said, "what an ungenerous proceeding to employ so large a force against so small a power!" Does the smallness of a country justify the magnitude of its evil acts? Is it to be held that if your subjects suffer violence, outrage, and plunder, in a country which is small and weak, you are to tell them, when they apply for compensation, that the country is so weak and so small that we cannot ask it for compensation? Their answer would be that the weakness and smallness of the country makes it the more easy to obtain redress.

At the close of the speech came the well-known peroration in which the Foreign Secretary extolled the dignity of English citizenship. He did not, he said, blame the Opposition for attacking Ministers; for the government of England was an object of fair and legitimate ambition for men of all shades of opinion.

For while we have seen . . . the political earthquake rocking Europe from side to side, while we have seen thrones shaken, shattered, levelled, institutions overthrown and destroyed, while in almost every country of Europe the conflict of civil war has deluged the land with blood, from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, this country has presented a spectacle honourable to the people of England and worthy of the admiration of mankind. We have shown that liberty is compatible with order, that individual freedom is not irreconcilable with obedience to the law. We have shown the example of a nation, in which every class of society accepts with cheerfulness the lot which Providence has assigned to it, while at the same time every individual of each class is constantly striving to raise himself in the social scale—not by injustice and wrong, not by violence and illegality—but by persevering good conduct, and by the steady and energetic exertion of the moral and intellectual faculties with which his Creator has endowed him. To govern such a people as this is indeed an object worthy of the ambition of the noblest man who lives in the land; and there-

fore I find no fault with those who may think any opportunity a fair one for endeavouring to place themselves in so distinguished and honourable a position. . . . But, making allowances for those differences of opinion, which may fairly and honourably arise among those who concur in general views, I maintain that the principles which can be traced through all our foreign transactions, as the guiding rule and directing spirit of our proceedings, are such as deserve approbation. I therefore fearlessly challenge the verdict which this House, as representing a political, a commercial, a constitutional country, is to give on the question before it; whether the principles on which the foreign policy of this country has been conducted, and the sense of duty which has led us to think ourselves bound to afford protection to our fellow subjects abroad, are proper and fitting guides for those who are charged with the government of England, and whether, as the Roman in the days of old held himself free from indignity when he could say *Civis Romanus sum*, so also a British subject, in whatever land he be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England shall protect him against injustice and wrong.

This speech not only gave the Government a handsome majority of forty-six, but it raised the reputation of Palmerston to a height to which none of his contemporaries, not even Lord John Russell himself, could hope to aspire. "We are proud of the man who delivered that most able and temperate speech" was Sir Robert Peel's generous acknowledgment; and Palmerston wrote to his brother, that he was for the present the most popular Minister that for a very long course of time had held his office. The Don Pacifico debate was unquestionably an important landmark in the life of Lord Palmerston. Hitherto his merits had been known only to a select few; for the British public does not read Blue Books, and as a rule troubles itself very little about foreign politics at all. His greatest achievements had passed almost unnoticed by the electorate, though they had certainly looked upon him as a strong and capable man. But the Pacifico speech caught the ear of the

nation, and was received with a universal verdict of approval. From that hour Lord Palmerston became the man of the people, and his rise to the premiership only a question of time. As Mr. Morley has pointed out in his *Life of Cobden*, Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli were unable to keep in power if they got there ; the Whigs were steadily losing ground in popular opinion ; the Manchester School was out of the question. Lord Palmerston's only possible rival was Sir Robert Peel, and he met his death the very day after he had taken part in the Pacifico debate.

At the same time there were breakers ahead. The distrust of the Court continued without abatement, and attempt was made, with the concurrence of Lord John Russell, the Duke of Bedford, Lord Lansdowne, and Lord Clarendon, to induce the Foreign Secretary to accept some other office, which, however, he declined to do. Fresh negligence brought down upon him fresh rebukes from the Queen, culminating in the famous Memorandum of August the 12th, in which she required that, under penalty of dismissal, (1) he would distinctly state what he proposed in a given case, in order that the Queen might know as distinctly to what she had given her Royal sanction ; (2) that, having once given her sanction to a measure, it should not be arbitrarily altered or modified by the Minister. Palmerston, with tears in his eyes, protested to Prince Albert that he had been accused of being wanting in respect to the Queen, which was an imputation on his honour as a gentleman : pleaded stress of business, and the loss of time incurred by sending despatches to the Queen through the Premier : and promised amendment. He did not resign, he afterwards explained, for several reasons, because he had no reason to believe that the memorandum would ever be

made public; because he had recently gained a signal victory in the Commons, and to have resigned then would have been to have delivered the fruits of victory to the adversaries whom he had defeated; and thirdly, because he would have been bringing to the bar of public opinion, a quarrel between himself and his Sovereign, the result of which course must have been fatal to himself or injurious to his country.

Within a month he had submitted a letter of regret for the maltreatment of the "Austrian butcher" General Haynau, by Messrs. Barclay's draymen, to Baron Koller the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires, without consulting the Premier or the Queen, which contained a paragraph to which they both objected, and which they forced him to withdraw. This was early in September. Early in November, Kossuth arrived in England, and Palmerston, dissuaded by the united representations of the Cabinet from receiving him at Broadlands, relieved his feelings by receiving a deputation of Islington and Finsbury Radicals, to whom, in return for their denunciations of the Emperors of Russia and Austria as "odious and detestable assassins" and "merciless tyrants and despots," he delivered the "judicious bottle-holder" oration, and thanked them for their flattering and gratifying expressions of opinion.

The impropriety of such language was so obvious, that the virulence of the Kossuth mania in England was probably the only reason which prevented Lord John Russell from effecting his long meditated manifestation of authority. "I think," was Greville's comment, "this is on the whole the worst thing he (Palmerston) has ever done." Certainly Lord John Russell, who had swallowed the camel, seems to have strained at a gnat, when he ejected Palmerston from office on the 19th of

December, for having expressed his approval of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*, in a conversation with the French Minister, Count Walewski; and Greville's surmise, that the occasion was made a *casus belli* because Palmerston had taken the unpopular side, was probably right. No doubt it was extremely inconvenient, when Lord Normanby informed the French Foreign Minister that he was directed to observe a policy of strict neutrality, that he should receive intimation that, two days before, Count Walewski had conveyed Palmerston's entire approbation of the act of Louis Napoleon. Our Minister and Government were placed in an extremely false position. Still Lord John Russell never attempted to deny that he, Lord Lansdowne, and Sir Charles Wood, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had also expressed their approval of the *coup d'état* to Count Walewski in conversation; and there is, as diplomats know, considerable force in Palmerston's argument that his communication was "unofficial."\* Lord John probably thought that the sum total of Palmerston's offences was so great that any harshness towards him was justifiable, even the crowning indignity of the offer of the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland. When the usual explanations took place in the House of Commons, he was even more relentless, and produced with crushing effect the Queen's memorandum of August 1850. Palmerston, who had refused to believe that so complete an

\* Lord Malmesbury clearly acknowledges the distinction between an "official" and "unofficial" conversation (*Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, i. 303, note). On the other hand the Duke of Wellington pronounced most decidedly against any attempt to establish a distinction between private and official opinions. "Oh, but that won't do," he said to Prince Albert, "That would be dishonest. It would be appearing in two characters. No! No! We are very particular on that point." (*Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. ii., p. 427.)

execution was imminent, was exceedingly inefficient in his defence ; and most people would probably have agreed with the comment in Macaulay's diary, " Palmerston is out. It was high time ; but I cannot help feeling sorry."

The constitutional questions raised by the struggle between the Foreign Secretary and the Court were of a very complicated nature. Let us say at once that Lord Palmerston cannot be held to have been actuated by any deliberate disrespect for the Crown. His contention was this—that his experience in foreign affairs was more extended than that of Prince Albert, and that he might therefore claim an immunity from supervision in matters of detail, though he acknowledged that both the Crown and the Premier had a right to consider the draft of despatches upon matters of importance. He was also of opinion that the transmission of despatches involved great waste of time in cases of urgency, that their alteration was frequently the cause of grave ambiguity of language, in short, that too many cooks spoil the broth. Such contentions are evidently of considerable force. But there can hardly be any doubt that Lord Palmerston really aimed at a far greater measure of independence than he professed ; that if he had been able to get his own way, he would have secured the *imperium in imperio* of Lord Melbourne's time ; and that, failing to get it by direct means, he had resort to subterfuges and neglects of duty, the ultimate object of which was to steal a march upon his Sovereign and colleagues when they happened to disagree with him.

On the other hand, it is impossible not to see that the Court, through want of judgment, by no means adopted the most straightforward means of reconciling their

views with those of the Foreign Secretary. Instead of encouraging him to lay his opinions freely before them in frequent interviews and direct intercourse, they treated him with distrust and appeared to shun his society. The interposition of Lord John Russell was invoked, the arrangement being that “the despatches submitted for (the Queen’s) approval must pass through the hands of Lord John Russell, who, if he should think that they required any material change, should accompany them with a statement of his reasons.” To the transmission through the Prime Minister Lord Palmerston agreed; and the fact says volumes for his generous and loyal disposition. For if the arrangement had been carried out to the letter, the result would have been, that while the Foreign Secretary prepared the drafts, they would have been discussed and settled between the Prime Minister and the Sovereign.\* He would thus have been reduced from a confidential servant of the Crown, to the position of a mere clerk, indeed his position would have become almost intolerable for a man of any self-respect. Even with the most delicate treatment, the system could hardly fail to create and perpetuate a feeling of antagonism between the Prime Minister and the head of the Foreign Department, and it should certainly never have been proposed to Lord Palmerston as a law of conduct. Though approved by Lord John, it seems to have been almost entirely the work of Stockmar, and expressive of the feelings of the Court. Fresh suspicion and confusion was the inevitable result; and Lord Palmerston’s admirers might fairly have advanced as an excuse for some of his escapades, that he was proscribed and subordinated to another, in a place where he had every right to play the part of a familiar friend.

\* Mr. Gladstone’s *Gleanings of Past Years*, vol. i. p. 87.

“There *was* a Palmerston,” said Mr. Disraeli; and Guizot, himself in exile, raised a *Nunc dimittis* when he heard of his enemy’s overthrow. The member for Tiverton bore his temporary adversity with that entire absence of rancour which is perhaps the most delightful trait in his fine nature. “Ah, how are you, Granville?” he said to his successor; “Well, you have got a very interesting office, but you will find it very laborious,” and proceeded to give him every assistance in his power. There was no ill-feeling in his mind against the Court, though he imagined that they had been influenced by foreign, especially Orleanist, influences in his dismissal. This view he communicated to his brother without circumlocution, together with a curious story about a contemplated descent upon the French coast by the Orleanist princes, the Duc d’Aumale and the Prince de Joinville, which he believed to have precipitated Napoleon’s *coup d'état*, and which induced him to express his warm approval of that measure. Nor did he bear any unworthy resentment against Lord John Russell. According to Lord Shaftesbury, he never alluded to him but with a laugh, and “Oh, he’s a foolish fellow, but we shall go on very well now.”

It is only fair then to consider that Palmerston was not influenced by personal motives in his attack upon Lord John’s Militia Bill, by which, within a very short space of time, he so signally avenged his own dismissal from office. “I have had my tit-for-tat with John Russell,” he wrote to his brother, “and I turned him out on Friday last”; but he hastened to add that his only object was to persuade the House to reject the feeble plan of the Government. Indeed, few statesmen of the day had taken more honourable interest in the state of

our defences, or had spoken more frequently on the subject. A memorandum which he addressed to Lord Melbourne, set forth the liability of England to invasion with a fulness of knowledge that a military authority might envy. During Peel's ministry he had examined the Government on harbours and fortifications with a persistency which aroused the wrath of Cobden, and which calls forth the mirth of Cobden's biographer, Mr. John Morley. Nor can it be questioned that Palmerston's amendment, which made the militia generally instead of "locally" available, was a vast improvement to the measure. It might have been accepted by the ministry without loss of honour, and he suspected them of incurring the defeat because they were anxious to escape from the responsibility of carrying on the Government any longer. A passage in Lord John Russell's *Reminiscences* proves that the guess was correct.

The tit-for-tat naturally drew attention once more to Palmerston's political isolation. In spite of his long service in the Whig ranks, he was still a political free lance ; and Lord Derby, to whom fell the formation of a ministry, thrice made overtures for his services ; in February 1852, again in July, and for a third time in December. All proposals were, however, declined, chiefly because of the Protectionist colour of the administration, though Palmerston gave valuable support to their Militia Bill, and even prolonged their existence at the opening of the new Parliament by bringing forward an amendment to Mr. Charles Villiers' free trade resolution which they were able to accept without loss of dignity. Conscious of his own strength, he was but little troubled by the gloomy looks of his former colleagues, whom from time to time he treated rather unkindly. When at the Tiverton hustings, the local orator

the butcher, Rowcliffe, attempted to rally him on his position, Palmerston blandly replied that whatever Government he meant to join, he would never join a Government called a Rowcliffe Administration. His letters show that he was equally determined not to serve again under "Johnny"; and the admission which he went on to make, that Johnny was not likely to serve under him, proves that he felt that his own hour was not yet come. There happened at this time to be a movement on foot among the Whigs for uniting the Liberal party under the eminently prudent leadership of Lord Lansdowne; and though it was not initiated in any way by Palmerston, he gave it his cordial support. Age and ill-health, however, compelled Lord Lansdowne to determine upon a *nolo episcopari*; and on the retirement of the Derby Ministry, Lord Aberdeen constructed a cabinet of Peelites and Whigs, with Sir William Molesworth as the representative of Philosophic Radicalism.

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## CHAPTER IX.

## THE ABERDEEN MINISTRY.

1852-1855.

Lord Palmerston at the Home Office—Legislation and Deputations—The Reform Bill—Temporary Resignation of Palmerston—Beginnings of the Eastern Question—The Menschikoff mission—Lord Palmerston's policy—His popularity with the nation—The Vienna note—The Concert of the Powers—Palmerston's description of the objects at issue—Declaration of war by Turkey—The Sinope disaster—Beginning of the war—The Napier banquet and its consequences—Proposal to make Palmerston Secretary at War—The Crimean expedition—Fall of the Ministry.

IN the Coalition Ministry Lord Palmerston, rather to the general surprise, was persuaded to take the Home Office. He did not yield until after considerable pressure had been put upon him, conscious, perhaps, that he was open to a charge of inconsistency if he served under a premier whose continental policy he had criticized so mercilessly. But the co-operation which he refused to Aberdeen was conceded to the solicitations of Lord Lansdowne, especially when he found that foreign affairs were to be in sound Whig hands. Palmerston chose the Home Office because it would bring him in contact with his fellow-countrymen, and would give him influence with regard to the militia and the

national defences ; and as Home Secretary he was a most unqualified success. "I never knew any Home Secretary," wrote Lord Shaftesbury, "equal to Palmerston for readiness to undertake every good work of kindness, humanity, and social good, especially to the child and the working class. No fear of wealth, capital, or election terrors ; prepared at all times to run a tilt if he could do good by it. Has already done more good than ten of his predecessors." The Shaftesbury hall-mark was indeed to be seen in most of his measures, with the exception of the timely extinction of the Board of Health, which vexed the righteous soul of his relative. The Youthful Offenders' Bill gave Government aid to reformatory schools, and greatly increased their number and efficiency ; the Factory Acts were amended for the benefit of children ; the institution of tickets-of-leave effected an admirable reform in the criminal system ; while attention was paid to the health of the people of London by measures for the abatement of the smoke nuisance, and for shutting up the graveyards within the metropolitan area.

If Lord Palmerston's legislation was influenced by others, his manner of receiving deputations and answering memorials was entirely his own. Mr. Evelyn Ashley records that when the people of Rugely wanted a new name for their town, which had acquired notoriety through having been the residence of the poisoner, Palmer, the Home Secretary asked them how his own name, "Palmerstown," would suit them. His answer to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, who requested that a national fast might be appointed on account of the visitation of the cholera, was even more Palmerstonian, and resulted, wrote Lord Shaftesbury, in his being regarded by the religious world as little better than an infidel.

The Maker of the Universe [he replied] has established certain laws of nature for the planet in which we live, and the weal or woe of mankind depends upon the observance or the neglect of these laws. One of these laws connects health with the absence of those gaseous exhalations which proceed from overcrowded human dwellings, or from decomposing substances, whether animal or vegetable; and those same laws render sickness the almost inevitable consequence of exposure to these noxious influences. But it has, at the same time, pleased Providence to place it within the power of man to make such arrangements, as will prevent or disperse such exhalations so as to render them harmless, and it is the duty of man to attend to those laws of nature and to exert the faculties which Providence has thus given to man for his own welfare. . . . When man has done the utmost for his own safety, then is the time to invoke the blessing of Heaven to give effect to his exertions.

During the existence of the unlucky Aberdeen Government, Lord Palmerston not unfrequently acted as chief of the ministerial party in the House of Commons, while Lord John Russell remained at Richmond, disgusted with the abnormal position of leader without office, which the rearrangement of the Cabinet had compelled him to accept. The Home Secretary's direction of the business of the House was thoroughly good-humoured and judicious; even Greville is constrained to chronicle his great popularity with all sections of the political world. But within the Cabinet there was but little unanimity on any subject. The views of Lord John Russell and several of the Peelites, especially Lord Aberdeen and Sir John Graham, were far more advanced on the question of Reform than were those of Lord Palmerston and Lord Lansdowne, who disliked the thing itself, and more particularly Lord John's persistency in introducing a Reform Bill at a moment when the aspect of foreign affairs was menacing in the extreme. The Home Secretary swallowed his objections so far as to consent to serve on the committee of the

Cabinet for the preparation of the proposed Bill. But when Lord John stated his scheme, Palmerston, in a letter to Lord Lansdowne, raised a number of objections, which, in the opinion of Lord Aberdeen, as expressed in a letter dated the 14th of December, were "so serious as to strike at the most essential principles of the measure," and which were accordingly rejected by the Committee. Palmerston thereupon sent in his resignation, and was out of the Cabinet for ten days. The world naturally jumped to the conclusion that Reform was only a pretext, and that Palmerston had really resigned because of the want of vigour in the Eastern policy of the Cabinet. Mr. Ashley appears to countenance that idea, and Mr. Kinglake, going a step further, actually asserts that Lord Palmerston was "driven from office." But a passage in one of Palmerston's letters to his brother-in-law, Mr. Sullivan, directly contradicts that view; and no one who reads the correspondence between Lord Aberdeen and his dissentient colleague, published in the *Quarterly Review* of April 1877, can possibly doubt that the Reform Bill was the sole reason for Palmerston's resignation, though the reviewer's suggestion that he hoped that Lansdowne would also withdraw, and so break up the Cabinet, appears to be rather uncharitable.

From the Malmesbury and Greville memoirs it may be gathered that both parties in the Cabinet, that of the Premier and the Home Secretary, were conscious of having made a mistake in failing to come to terms, and that a reconciliation was accordingly not difficult to arrange. Lord Palmerston's withdrawal of his resignation was accepted by the embarrassed Premier; and the Home Secretary, though he was compelled for the moment to accept the obnoxious Bill, was eventually compensated

by its abandonment in the face of the complete indifference of public opinion.

All this while Lord Palmerston, though most conscientious in his discharge of the duties of his multifarious office, and most assiduous in his attendance at the House of Commons, was seldom absent in spirit from the shores of the Golden Horn and the banks of the Danube. Even Mr. Cobden himself could hardly have denied that the ex-Foreign Secretary, though he might be supposed to approach the Eastern Question with prejudice, brought to bear upon it at any rate a considerable amount of knowledge. Ever since 1830 he had made an intricate study of Russian diplomacy, and had watched the twists and turns of Russian statesmanship in crises as serious as that of 1840. He was yet at the Foreign Office when, in 1850, the dispute concerning the guardianship of the Holy Places was revived by Louis Napoleon, as a distinct bid against Russia for paramount influence in the East ; and he had been duly warned by our Minister at Constantinople, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, that the question at issue, though apparently trivial, might easily develop into one of most serious moment. At the outset he attempted to avert war by directing Lord Normanby to persuade the French Government to moderate its unreasonable demands in favour of the Latin Church. The Catholics in Turkey, he pointed out, were few in number, there were millions of Greeks ; Russia, the protectress of the latter, was a colossal power close on the Sultan's back ; France, the advocate of the Catholics, was a long way off.

As soon, however, as Prince Menschikoff's mission to Constantinople disclosed an entirely new programme of Russian aggression, namely, a claim to a protectorate

over all the Greeks within the Turkish Empire, which was presented in the form of an ultimatum and supported by military demonstrations on the Turkish frontier, Lord Palmerston's tone changed, and he advocated the answering of threat by threat. He was aware, as were the rest of the Ministry, that the Czar had long ago told Sir Hamilton Seymour that the "sick man" was at the point of death, and that in the division of the inheritance, although he would not establish himself at Constantinople as proprietor, "as trustee—that he would not say." And though he was not privileged like Count Vitzthum to listen to the wild outbursts of the Czar against *ces chiens de Turcs*, Palmerston must have been aware that the existence of the fatal agreement to recognise the Russian protectorship of the Greek religion in Syria, between the autocrat on the one hand, and Peel, the Duke, and Aberdeen on the other,\* would drive Nicholas to new acts of menace directly Lord Aberdeen returned to power.

Palmerston's description of the methods of Russian encroachment is as true to day as it was when it was written :—

The Russian Government [he wrote to Lord Clarendon] has always had two strings to its bow—moderate language and disinterested professions at St. Petersburg and at London; active aggression by its agents on the scene of operations. If the aggression succeed locally, the St. Petersburg Government adopts them as a *fait accompli* which it did not intend but cannot in honour recede from. If the local agents fail, they are disavowed and recalled, and the language previously held is appealed to as a proof that the agents have overstepped their instructions.

When this system of mingled threats and caresses was followed by the occupation of the Principalities by a Russian army, Palmerston urged that the French and

\* Lord Malmesbury's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 402.

English fleets should at once be sent up to the Bosphorus to encourage the Porte and give check to the Czar; but the Aberdeen party in the Cabinet was too strong for him. Not that he was under the illusion that such a course of action would prevent war; on the contrary, he was of opinion that the Czar "was bent on a stand-up fight," and felt that to meet the enemy half-way was more consonant with the traditions of English statesmanship, and would be more popular with the country, than bated breath and whispered humbleness. "If he [the Emperor] is determined to break a lance with us," he wrote to Mr. Sidney Herbert, "why then, have at him, say I, and perhaps he may have enough of it before we have done with him." At the same time, he had taken the right measure of the man when he asserted that Nicholas was far more likely to yield to action than to argument. If the Czar had known the crossing of the Pruth would be made a *casus belli*, it was probably that he would have thought twice about crossing it; when once he had crossed the river, it was difficult to retreat without loss of honour at the bidding of any Power or any collection of Powers.

Lord Palmerston had certainly interpreted the feeling of the country aright. Young England was actually eager for a war with Russia; and nearly everyone was of opinion that the extreme moderation of the English Government was not likely to gain its end, and that a bolder policy would more probably be crowned with success. Lord Palmerston was known to favour a vigorous conduct. Conscious, as he must have been of the immense power that he wielded as the people's man in an inharmonious administration, it is greatly to his credit that he did not attempt to force the hand of our Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, during the anxious period

while it seemed as if peace might yet be achieved by diplomacy. He even went so far as to conceal his approbation on an occasion when Lord Clarendon sent particularly bold directions to Sir Hamilton Seymour, from fear lest words of praise from him whom men called "Lord Firebrand," might make the Aberdeens and Grahams of the Cabinet think that they were committed to some desperate adventure. In fact his relations with Clarendon were most harmonious, and there is no warrant for Greville's insinuation that he attempted to undermine his colleagues by keeping up a correspondence with Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. To the views of Prince Albert he paid far less deference, and wrote, doubtless with considerable gusto, a slashing commentary on the Prince's very sensible memorandum on Eastern Affairs, which was far more critical than candid, and which the Prime Minister subjected to a very unfavourable examination.

Possibly the Home Secretary felt that when every concession on the part of England and France was followed by a fresh menace on the part of Russia, war, sooner or later, was inevitable ; and that it was unnecessary to do more than record the fulfilment of his various prophecies. Even Lord Aberdeen's belief in the pacific intentions of the Emperor was shaken when, in return for our advice to the Porte not to make the occupation of the Principalities a *casus belli*, but to give diplomacy another chance, a circular was issued by Count Nesselrode, in which that very occupation was declared to be in answer to the presence of the British and French squadrons outside the Dardanelles, where they had every right to be stationed. "It is," wrote Palmerston, "the robber who declares that he will not leave the house until the policeman shall have first retired from the

back yard"; still he acquiesced in Lord Aberdeen's decision that an expostulation would for the moment be enough. His opinion of the Vienna Note is not on record. But, if we may judge by his advice on subsequent diplomatic attempts to create a *modus vivendi* between Russia and the Porte, he disapproved of the vague language of the document which was so signally turned to good account by Count Nesselrode, and agreed with Lord Stratford in countenancing the right of the Sultan to amend the note in his favour. It was unjust, he contended, later on, to attempt to impose a form of words on Turkey which we were not equally prepared to impose on Russia.

The chief blot on the system of action advocated by Lord Palmerston, was that it was adapted rather to a question in which England was acting single-handed, than to one in which it was necessary to pay considerable deference to the wishes of the other Powers. He seems to have put his trust entirely in that Anglo-French Alliance, of which by his approbation of the *coup d'état* he had been the creator, and to have paid small regard to the moral support of Austria and Prussia. It is true that in his public utterances, Lord Palmerston, wishing, no doubt, to put a stop to the stories of ministerial differences that were flying about, laid considerable stress upon the value of the European concert. "I believe," he said on Feb. 20th, 1854, "I shall not overstate the truth when I say that the conduct of England and France in that respect has been thoroughly appreciated by Austria and by Prussia; whereas if matters had been hurried on in the course of last summer, when we might have had no reason or right to expect their co-operation, I cannot persuade myself that the conduct of Austria and Prussia would have been the

same as it is at the present time." But though the voice was the voice of Palmerston, the arguments were the arguments of Aberdeen; and the Home Secretary was more in his element when he proceeded to describe the objects at issue.

All the Powers [he said] have acknowledged in the most solemn and distinct manner that the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire is an essential condition for the maintenance of the peace of Europe, that it is an essential element in the balance of power, and that it would be a calamity to Europe if any attempt was made to destroy that integrity and independence. Why, even Russia, while she is pursuing the course which is acknowledged by all, except herself, to be fatal to that independence—even Russia does not venture to deny that principle that the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire is an essential element and condition of the welfare of Europe. Now, Sir, it is manifest that if Russia were to appropriate these territories now under the sway and sovereignty of the Sultan, she would become a power too gigantic for the safety of the other states of Europe. Bestriding the continent from north to south, possessing the command of two seas, the Baltic and the Mediterranean, enveloping the whole of Germany, embracing regions full of every natural resource, and with a population of enormous extent, she would become dangerous to the liberties of Europe, and her power would be fatal to the independence of other states. I say, therefore, it is the duty of the other countries of Europe to prevent such enormous aggrandizement of one Power as that which would result from such a change.

The declaration of war by Turkey, after the failure of the Vienna Note had shown that the hour for the conflict of pens had gone by, was considered by Palmerston to be not unnatural and not unwise. He was equally pleased with the successive decisions of the Cabinet to give material support to Turkey: that of September by which Lord Stratford was authorized to summon the fleet to the Bosphorus, that of October by which he was permitted to direct defensive operations in the Black Sea. We had now crossed the Rubicon, Lord Palmerston considered, and had taken Turkey by the hand; he pooh-poohed, as has been mentioned above, the Prince

Consort's memorandum, in which a fear was expressed lest the Turks were seeking "to obtain for themselves the power of imposing a most oppressive rule of two millions of fanatic Mussulmans over twelve millions of Christians," and argued that—

No peace can be concluded between the contending parties unless the Emperor consents to evacuate the Principalities, to abandon his demands, and to renounce some of the embarrassing stipulations of former treaties upon which he has founded the pretensions which have been the cause of existing difficulties.

This was a well-defined position with a vengeance ; but it had the merit of making the war something better than a mere *querelle d'Allemand*, and answers the objections of historians like Mr. Spencer Walpole, who urge that the Crimean campaign was unnecessary after the retirement of the Russian troops from the Principalities. On the following day came the news of the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope, that untoward event which more than any other precipitated the war ; and it is to be noted that the British Cabinet, by way of reprisal, agreed to the proposal of the French Emperor that the combined squadrons should not merely enter the Black Sea but "invite" every Russian vessel they met to return to Sebastopol, during the period of Palmerston's absence from office. So that the blame, if blame there be, for the actual commencement of hostilities rests, not on the man who believed them from the first to be inevitable, but upon his colleagues, including those who had been most inclined to throw cold water on his bold counsels in the past.

The war was unavoidable ; it was, to use a happy expression of the Prince Consort's, a "vindication of the public law of Europe" ; but it was a serious matter, and should not have been regarded by any responsible statesman with a light heart. Probably Lord Palmerston did

appreciate its gravity ; but the outside world was not allowed to suspect the fact, and his public utterances on the eve of its declaration were couched in a tone of flippancy and jocularity which, though possibly intended, as Mr. Ashley suggests, to keep up the heart and spirit of the nation, can hardly be read now without a feeling of irritation and regret. On March 7th, Lord Palmerston presided over a banquet given at the Reform Club to Sir Charles Napier, previous to his departure to take command of the Baltic fleet. Of his essentially after-dinner remarks, and the rather small jokes with which they were interspersed, it is unnecessary to reproduce any specimens here ; but it is fair to mention that they were discretion itself when compared with the utterances of Sir James Graham, who was also present in the capacity of First Lord of the Admiralty. When taken to task a few days later by Mr. Bright, in the House of Commons, Lord Palmerston made a still sorrier exhibition of himself, and for once in his life gave vent to some ill-natured remarks. Mr. Bright, according to Lord Shaftesbury, was one of the few men whom he really regarded as an enemy ; and a desire to pay off old scores was probably his motive for beginning his answer with “ The honourable and reverend gentleman,” and continuing, “ I am further convinced that the opinion of the country with regard to me and my conduct will in no way whatever be influenced by anything which the hon. gentleman may say. I therefore treat the censure of the hon. gentleman with the most perfect indifference and contempt.” Mr. Disraeli did well to complain during this period of the “ patrician bullying of the Treasury bench.”

Fortunately for himself and the Ministry, Lord Palmerston’s outbursts against the Peace Party were limited

in number, and that Party had become so thoroughly out of favour with the nation on account of the vehemence with which it published its views, that people were inclined to condone expressions of asperity against its members. His popularity does not seem to have been shaken by the Napier banquet and its consequences. And public opinion marked him out so distinctly as the man in whose hands should be placed the conduct of military operations, that his old opponent Lord John Russell, when he proposed to Lord Aberdeen in November that the unwieldy arrangement then in existence should be abolished, and the offices of Secretary *at* War and Secretary *for* War united in the same person, designated Lord Palmerston as the most fitting man in the Cabinet to fill the onerous position. However, the Premier refused to entertain the idea out of consideration for the feelings of the Duke of Newcastle, who was at the head of the War Department, and finally Palmerston himself vetoed the plan. Whether a change of men would have permanently checked the prevalent mismanagement, may be doubted ; for, as Lord Palmerston pointed out at the beginning of the next session, it was the system more than the Duke of Newcastle that was at fault ; still it would certainly have been one for the better, and would have been decidedly popular.

Even though he did not direct operations in person, Palmerston's word had weighty influence on the progress of the war. He urged all along that it was not enough to drive the Russians back from the Danube, as the Turks were doing without allied assistance ; but that there must be "security for the future"—it was Pitt's phrase—against the repetition of the Russian attack, and that the only way of obtaining that security was to strike the Empire of the Czar in a vital part. The scheme for

the invasion of the Crimea did not originate with Palmerston, for it seems to have been hatched by the much-contriving mind of the Emperor of the French ; but he was its most powerful advocate, and reduced it from a vague sketch to a proposition of practical value. "The capture of Sebastopol and the Russian Black Sea fleet," he wrote, "would be a lasting and important advantage to us. Such a success would act with great weight upon the fortunes of the war and would tell essentially upon the negotiations for peace."

These were considerations which would weigh chiefly with statesmen ; military men naturally considered the question from a military point of view, and it is one of the commonplaces of history that both Lord Raglan and Marshal St. Arnaud were opposed to the campaign. At the same time the prosaic but inexorable logic of facts points to the conclusion that Lord Palmerston was right and Lord Raglan wrong. Granting the necessity of striking at a vital part of the Russian Empire, it was impossible to strike elsewhere, the operations in the Baltic having failed, than in the Crimea. Had Lord Raglan not been overruled, and had an attack in force been made on Sebastopol immediately after the Alma, there can be no doubt that the campaign would have been one of weeks instead of months. Lastly, it was the fall of Sebastopol alone that broke the spirit of Russia and made a durable peace possible.

The adventure miscarried at first, however, and the Aberdeen Ministry fell long before the Malakoff. When Lord John Russell's factious resignation, in the teeth of Mr. Roebuck's motion of inquiry, rendered a speedy termination of the existence of the Coalition Administration inevitable, Palmerston, its most popular member, made its funeral speech. His most significant re-

mark was that he trusted that at least the dissensions which prevailed might be confined to the overthrowing of the Government; and that whatever Government might succeed, we should not exhibit to Europe the melancholy spectacle of a country interrupting by party and political struggles the conduct of great national interests. To the discredit of our party system this dignified appeal was speedily forgotten. Few Oppositions have been more given over to faction, and less awake to the true interests of the nation, than that against which Lord Palmerston had to contend when he undertook to restore the fallen fortunes of his country, and to raise her once more to her true place among the States of Europe.

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## CHAPTER X.

## THE CONCLUSION OF THE RUSSIAN WAR.

1855-1856.

Attempts to form a Ministry—Lord Palmerston accepts the task—His difficulties—Darkness of the prospect—Harmony of the Cabinet—Lord Palmerston's tactics—The second Vienna Conference—The Austrian compromise—Conclusion of the war—The Congress of Paris—The Treaty—Lord Palmerston receives the Garter.

WHEN the Coalition Cabinet fell, amidst a chorus of derisive laughter at the completeness of its defeat, the popular voice loudly called for Lord Palmerston to take command of the ship of State and bring her through the storm. The mandate which summoned Pitt to supplant Addington in 1804 was hardly more imperious than that which in 1855 designated Palmerston as the successor of Aberdeen. Several weeks earlier that well-informed observer, Mr. Greville, had seen in the Home Secretary's improved position at Court the removal of the most serious obstacle between him and the Premiership. Lord Palmerston was, in fact, as he himself wrote to his brother, *l'inéritable*; and he added the happy quotation,

Quod nemo promittere Divum  
Auderet, volvenda dies en attulit ultro.

Derby and his followers, however, formed the principal part of the majority which had turned out the Government ; and the Queen, true to constitutional principles, summoned him to Windsor. The Tory chief sought the support of Lord Palmerston, to whom he offered the leadership of the House of Commons, which Mr. Disraeli was ready to surrender. His first answer appears to have been not unfavourable. But when the decided refusals of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert to take office, and finally of Lord Clarendon to join a Conservative ministry as Foreign Secretary, showed that he would have to go over to the Conservatives alone, he determined to decline the proposal, and Lord Derby, greatly to the disgust of his followers, gave up the attempt. Lord Lansdowne's and Lord John Russell's efforts were even shorter lived. The former statesman could only be induced to undertake the Premiership for a few months ; and Lord John, though Palmerston, at the especial request of the Queen, magnanimously promised him support, soon discovered that his recent displays of faction had so completely disgusted even his old Whig colleagues that he was in the position of a general without an army, and after less than forty-eight hours he too was compelled to retire. *L'inéritable* then came to the rescue, his way having been made smooth for him by the representations of Lord Clarendon to the Queen ; and the question, " How is the Queen's Government to be carried on ? " always momentous, and during a European war a matter of life or death, was at length answered to the general satisfaction as far as the Premiership was concerned.\*

\* The first Palmerston Cabinet was composed as follows :—  
Viscount Palmerston, First Lord of the Treasury  
Lord Cranworth, Lord Chancellor.

It was not without considerable difficulty that Lord Palmerston succeeded in forming an administration. The Whigs were ready enough to join him, but the good offices of Lord Aberdeen had to be brought into play before the Peelites would consent to become members of a Government which they feared would be animated with too unreasonable a spirit towards negotiations for peace. The Ministry in its first form practically consisted of the "old lot," minus Lord Aberdeen, the Duke of Newcastle, and Lord John Russell, and probably, as a whole, commanded but little confidence. In fact, the speedy resignation of the Peelites, through Mr. Roebuck's persistency in his motion of inquiry, was really, in the long run, a gain—for what was lost in talent was gained in unity of action, and the possibly discordant effect of the accession of Lord John Russell, was neutralised by his having already accepted the appointment of Plenipotentiary at the Conference at Vienna. Still the delay in forming a Cabinet can hardly have been without its disquieting effect, a feel-

Earl Granville, President of the Council.

Duke of Argyll, Lord Privy Seal.

Earl of Clarendon, Foreign Secretary.

Sir G. Grey, Home Secretary.

Mr. Sidney Herbert, and on his resignation, Lord John Russell, Colonial Secretary.

Mr. Gladstone, and on his resignation, Sir G. Cornewall Lewis Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Lord Panmure, Secretary at War.

Sir C. Wood, Board of Control.

Sir James Graham, and, on his resignation, Sir C. Wood, who was replaced at the Board of Control by Mr. Vernon Smith, First Lord of the Admiralty.

Lord Harrowby, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Viscount Canning, Postmaster-General.

Sir W. Molesworth, First Commissioner of Works.

Marquis of Lansdowne, without office.

ing which was increased by the confusion which accompanied the minor appointments. The Premier's cheerful acceptance of the situation was highly characteristic: "Ha, ha!" he laughed, "a comedy of errors."

It was a dark hour in the history of the nation when Lord Palmerston essayed the task which had been abandoned by the tried wisdom of Derby, Lansdowne, and John Russell. Far away in the Crimea the war was dragging on without much hope of a creditable solution, though the winter of discontent and mismanagement was happily over. The existence of the European concert was merely nominal. The Allies had discovered, many months previously, that though Austria was staunch, Prussia was a faithless friend; and there were even alarms that Frederick William might be dragged by his family connections, and by what Mr. Kinglake happily calls his "collection of fears," into a Russian alliance. Between the belligerent powers the cloud of suspicion and distrust grew thicker; for Abd-el-Medjid was known to be freely squandering his war loans on seraglios and palaces while Kars was starving; and though there was no reason for distrusting the present good faith of the Emperor of the French, his policy was straightforward only as long as he kept himself free from the influence of the gang of stock-jobbers and adventurers who composed his Ministry. Nor was the horizon much brighter on the side of England. A series of weak cabinets, and the absence of questions of organic reform, had completely relaxed the bonds of Party. If there was no regular Opposition, still less was there a regular majority; and the temper of the House of Commons was seen in its ungracious and almost jeering refusal of the Premier's request that the in-

quiry into the conduct of the war, moved for by Mr. Roebuck, should be postponed. And the hand that was to restore order out of chaos was not so steady as of yore. Whether from temporary ill-health or from the worry consequent on forming the administration, there can be no doubt that Lord Palmerston was not himself during the first weeks of his leadership.

But the prospect speedily brightened. Though Palmerston was considerably over seventy, he still retained a wonderful vigour of constitution. He was soon restored to health, and was always to be found at his post. At least, he had not to contend with divided counsels, for the first Palmerston Cabinet, though perhaps not remarkable in point of ability, seems to have worked very smoothly. The Prime Minister was of course an ideal colleague, and retained to the last those qualities of courage, resource, good-temper, indifference to abuse, and steadiness to his friends, which Lord Brougham has described him as exercising in the Grey Cabinet.\* Of the new men, by far the greatest acquisition was Sir George Cornewall Lewis, who, though absolutely inexperienced, had talents and business aptitudes which enabled him to fill with credit the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, even though he had been preceded by a magician of finance like Mr. Gladstone. Of the old hands, Lord Lansdowne brought with him the authority of a Nestor, and, according to Mr. Hayward, aided the Premier in giving tone to the Cabinet discussions. But of all that sat round the council-table, the most valuable ally was unquestionably Lord Clarendon. The Foreign Secretary told Greville that nothing could be more harmonious than his relations

\* Lord Brougham's *Life and Times*, vol. iii., p. 467. "I never knew," he writes, "a man whom it was more agreeable to act with"

with the Premier; and if Lord Palmerston is to be blamed for his insubordination to Melbourne and Russell, it is only fair to remember that he allowed his own Foreign Secretaries the utmost latitude of action. Lord Clarendon's chief service was that of keeping the Premier on good terms with the Queen, "always telling her everything likely to ingratiate Palmerston with her, and showing her any letters or notes of his calculated to please her," as Greville says; and his management of foreign affairs was characterised by a conciliatory firmness which was of incalculable value at a period when fretfulness and discontent were rife in courts and embassies.

Though the supporters of the Government were luke-warm, the divided state of the Opposition gave peculiar opportunities to a statesman who possessed, in a degree excelled perhaps only by Pitt and Disraeli, the arts of Parliamentary management. If a tenth of the stories that are told of Lord Palmerston's consummate generalship, of the supreme skill with which he seized on the exact moment for summing-up the debate and taking the division, are true; he must have been in his element in the guerilla warfare which was the chief feature of the Sessions of 1855 and 1856. A young tactician would have been confused by having to resist an attack from the Conservatives, on one day, on the ground that the Government was entertaining overtures for peace which were dishonourable; from the Peace party, on the next, because they did not bring the war to an immediate termination; but not so Lord Palmerston. He turned his heaviest guns on the Conservatives, and paid little or no attention to the Peace party, knowing well enough that they were wholly out of sympathy with the country. "I cannot reckon Cobden, Bright, and Co. for any-

thing," he wrote to Sir Hamilton Seymour, and Mr. John Morley acknowledges the justice of the estimate. When, however, the Peelites, and notably Mr. Gladstone, who had been partners in the declaration of war, threw themselves with great inconsistency into the arms of the Peace party, Lord Palmerston saw that the time for resolute action had come. His reply to a speech of Mr. Gladstone's, made on the 30th of July, in depreciation of the continuance of war, was crushing in the extreme.

No man [he said] could have been a party to entering into the great contest in which we are engaged—no man at least ought to have been a party to such a course of policy—without having deeply weighed the gravity of the struggle into which he was about to plunge the country, and without having satisfied his mind that the cause was just, that the motives were sufficient, and that the sacrifices which he was calling upon the country to make were such as a statesman might consider it ought to endure. Sir, there must indeed be grave reasons which could induce a man who had been a party with Her Majesty's Government to that line of policy, who had assisted in conducting the war, who had after full and perhaps unexampled deliberation agreed to enter upon the war, who, having concurred after that full and mature deliberation in the commencement of the war, had also joined in calling upon the country for great sacrifices in order to continue it, and who had, up to a very recent period, assented to all the measures proposed for its continuance; I say, there must, indeed, be grave reasons which could induce a man, who had been so far a party to the measures of the Government, utterly to change his opinions, to declare the war unnecessary, unjust, and impolitic, to set before the country all the imaginary dangers with which his fancy could supply him, and to magnify and to exaggerate the force of the enemy and the difficulties of our position.

His generalship secured ample majorities for the Government in every division during the session.

Of the energy which Lord Palmerston inspired into the operations against Sebastopol, there can hardly be two opinions. He may not have been a Chatham; but a letter of his to Lord Panmure, quoted by Mr. Ashley,

proves at any rate that he paid attention to every detail, and adopted no pennywise measures for raising troops. The addition of the Sardinian contingent to the fighting strength of the Allies had been a very solid gain ; Palmerston wished to enlist in addition Germans, Swiss, and Italians. Even more creditable were his precautions for the health of the troops ; and his representations to Lord Raglan, to prevent the Sanitary Commission despatched to the Crimea from being thwarted in their recommendations and directions, were most peremptory. No ; it is not for being laggard in war that Lord Palmerston can be reproached, but, if at all, for obstinacy in continuing the war. Little exception can be taken to his description of the designs of Russia :—

I say the intention of Russia to portion Turkey is manifest as the sun at noon-day, and it is to prevent that that we are contending. That is the object of the war, and not only to defend Turkey, the weak against the strong, but to avert injury and danger from ourselves. Let no man imagine, that if Turkey were destroyed by Russia, and that gigantic power stride like a Colossus from the Baltic on the one hand to the Mediterranean on the other, let no man suppose the great interests of this country would not be in peril ; let not the peace-at-any-price party imagine that their interest will not be deeply injured.

But the point at issue is whether the terms proposed by Austria at the second Vienna Conference were sufficiently binding to secure a permanent peace by safeguarding the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Now there was considerable doubt at the outset as to the motives of the Austrian Government ; the Emperor was well disposed, but the Allies wanted something more substantial than moral support. It was shrewdly suspected that the chief reason for the assembling of the Conference at Vienna was that the remonstrances

of the Western Powers had become inconveniently frequent there.\* And when the Russian conditions of peace came to be considered, they were found to be highly unsatisfactory by the French and English Governments. Of the "four points," propounded by the Western Powers, the first, second, and fourth, namely, the continued subjection of the Principalities to the Sultan, who, however, was to grant them autonomy; the free navigation of the Danube; and the independence of the Porte, were never seriously objected to by the Russian Plenipotentiary, Prince Gortschakoff. The discussions were almost entirely on the third point, the abrogation of the Russian supremacy in the Black Sea. The Western Powers demanded the neutralisation of the Black Sea, or a limitation of the number of Russian and Turkish ships of war. Prince Gortschakoff rejected any limitation of the Russian navy as an insult, and proposed plans based on the system of counterpoise which the Allies at once declared to be inadmissible. It was evident that, unless the Conference was to be wholly sterile, a compromise must be struck out by Austria, the Power which occupied a quasi-mediatorial position. Her first Plenipotentiary, Count Buol, therefore proposed that Russia should agree to maintain the naval *status quo* of 1853; and that each of the Western Powers should be entitled to station two frigates in the Black Sea, in order to see that Russia did not increase her fleet. At the same time Austria promised to consider it a *casus belli* if Russia set on float a single ship on the Euxine more than in 1853, and Count Buol agreed that the

\* These suspicions were probably unfounded. See the well-considered defence of Austrian statesmanship in Mr Kinglake's last volume.

proposal should be made to Russia in the form of an ultimatum.

As is well known, this compromise was accepted by the first English and French plenipotentiaries, Lord John Russell and M. Drouyn de Lhuys, but they were disavowed by their respective Governments; the Frenchman resigned immediately, Lord John remained Colonial Secretary until threatened by a vote of censure. The Austrian compromise was indeed in itself the sorriest make-shift, though Austrian intervention in the war, in the event of its being rejected by Russia, would have been extremely valuable to the Allies. It simply legalised the *prépondérance* which had existed before 1854, for the police espionage to be exercised by France and England would have been both costly and vexatious, and the idea that Austria would ever come to the assistance of the Allies was, in reality, as Lord Palmerston wrote to the Queen, a mockery. "What reason," he remarked, "is there for supposing that Austria, who has recently declared that, though prepared for war, she will not make war for ten sail-of-the-line more or less in the Russian Black Sea fleet, will some few years hence, when unprepared for war, draw the sword on account of the addition of one ship-of-war to that fleet?"\*

The second Vienna Conference, if it failed to produce a cessation of hostilities, had at least the merit that it laid plainly before the world the irreducible minimum of the British demands. And when negotiations were resumed once more, this time to be brought to a successful conclusion, the five points guided the delibera-

\* These objections to the Austrian compromise appear to have been overlooked by Mr. Kinglake, who has recently declared himself in its favour. But his explanation of Lord John Russell's motives for retaining office is thoroughly convincing.

tions of the Congress of Paris, and formed the bases of the settlement. In the interval the tendency of events had been steadily in the direction of peace. There was no abatement in the spirit of the nation, or in its readiness to make sacrifices in the cause of honour. Even after the fall of Sebastopol there were many, and Lord Derby was the most eloquent exponent of their views, who, not content with having brought Russia upon her knees, would have laid her on her back. It is more than probable that, in his inmost soul, Lord Palmerston held those views, and trusting in the unimpaired resources of the country, would have liked to risk another campaign in the hope that one of its incidents would be the taking of Cronstadt. It is possible to read between the lines of his letter to the Queen congratulating her upon the tidings that the Czar had accepted the new Austrian proposals, though they were propounded in the especially humiliating form of an ultimatum, the rejection of which would be followed by the appearance of Austria in the arena.

Viscount Palmerston [he wrote] fully concurs in the sentiment of regret expressed by Your Majesty to Lord Clarendon, that the last action of the war in which Your Majesty's troops have been engaged should, if peace be now concluded, have been the repulse at the Redan; but, however, it may suit national jealousy, which will always be found to exist on the other side of the Channel, to dwell on that check, yet Your Majesty may rely upon it that Alma and Inkermann have left recollections which will dwell in the memory of the living, and not to be forgotten in the page of history; and although it would no doubt be gratifying to Your Majesty and the nation that another summer should have witnessed the "fulfilment of the measures contemplated for the next campaign," yet if peace can now be secured on conditions honourable and secure, it would, as Your Majesty justly observes, not be right to continue the war for the mere purposes of prospective victories.

Count Vitzthum, writing many years afterwards, even asserts that Lord Clarendon actually confided to him

that he went to Paris with express instructions from Lord Palmerston not to allow peace to be made. But the anecdote is almost certainly an unconscious exaggeration. For we have Mr. Greville's express evidence to the contrary, when he says, on the authority of Sir George Cornewall Lewis, that Lord Clarendon, who was decidedly a man of peace, was not harassed by any instructions, but left entirely to his own discretion ; and Lord Clarendon himself denied in the House of Lords that the negotiations were insincere. Besides, Lord Palmerston was far too sane to insist on war to extinction, when, with the exception of little Sardinia, we had not an ally who could be counted upon. For the fall of Kars had shown that the valour of Turkish soldiers was counterbalanced by the corruption of the Turkish Government ; and though the good understanding between the French and English courts was complete, the Emperor had been completely converted to the side of peace through the exhaustion of his country, the embarrassment of his finances, and the unpopularity of the war with all sections of the French community.

“ So much for the capitulation of Paris,” said Lord Derby ; and a witty French diplomatist, M. de Bourqueney, declared that from an inspection of the treaty it was impossible to discover which were the conquerors and which the conquered. But both remarks are far more clever than true, and in spite of the somewhat captious objections of the Tory chief, the Peace of Paris may fairly be pronounced an arrangement which was honourable to England, and which had in it every element of stability. To Lord Clarendon and Lord Cowley, who conducted the negotiations with the utmost tact and vigour, though they had to contend with the open coalition of the French and Russian envoys at the

council-table, and the lukewarmness of Austria, belongs almost entirely the credit for the terms that were obtained. But to Lord Palmerston must at least be attributed a steady support of their representations, and unselfish acquiescence in their decisions, though he was himself in favour of the exaction of harder conditions. "Russia is humiliated," said Baron Brünnow, "and she is about to sign a treaty such as she has never signed before." He probably spoke in all sincerity, for never in the whole course of her history as a nation had Russia been compelled to consent to the surrender of territory; and the indignity was the greater because the cession of Bessarabia was made at the demand of non-belligerent Austria. The main object for which England had been fighting, "security for the future," was more than obtained by the restoration of Kars to the Sultan, the destruction of the fortifications of Sebastopol, the "efficacious assurance" of the free navigation of the Danube, the continuance of the Principalities under the suzerainty of the Porte, the understanding that no Power had a right to interfere in the internal administration of the Turkish Empire, and the neutralisation of the Black Sea to ships of war and military arsenals. It is true that the last condition was abrogated by Prince Gortschakoff's action in 1870; but what Russia may have gained in material strength by converting the Euxine into a private lake, she lost through the feeling of universal distrust which her conduct inspired throughout Europe. Besides, the Peace of Paris secured for the Ottoman Empire a freedom from external complications for twenty years, during which time it was not altogether ultra-Utopian to hope that it would take some measures for its own regeneration. And when at last the struggle began afresh, and the Russian eagles

drew near the city of Constantine, it was, as Lord Palmerston prophesied, the undying memory of the Alma and Inkermann which forced her to pause at the gates. The conditions were, in fact, amply satisfactory to England and France without being oppressive to Russia; and the Queen was only expressing the feelings of the nation when she offered Lord Palmerston the Garter in recognition of the manner in which, under his guidance, the war had been brought to a conclusion, and the honour and interests of the country had been maintained by the Treaty of Paris.

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## CHAPTER XI.

## WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS.

1856-1859.

Monotony of Home Affairs—Dispute with the United States—Russian chicanery—The Danubian Principalities—Egypt and the Suez Canal—Palmerston and Persigny—The Persian War—The “Arrow” Affair—The Dissolution and General Election—The Indian Mutiny—The Conspiracy to Murder Bill—Defeat of the Government.

DURING the whole of Lord Palmerston’s first administration, foreign politics continued to absorb the attention of Parliament and the press to the exclusion of home interests. With the exception of the storm in the teapot about the Wensleydale peerage, there was little to exercise the public mind until a grievance was manufactured from the “desecration of the Sabbath” by bands in the parks. Even Mr. Disraeli’s periodical exhibitions of fireworks barely evoked a cheer from the ranks of the Opposition. On continental questions alone was any interest taken, and of these an abundant crop was provided by the unsettled complications created by the Crimean war.

A little squabble with the United States was speedily settled. Under the provisions of the Foreign Enlist

ment Act, the Government had raised recruits whom they believed to be British subjects and Germans living in the United States for the regiments in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, several American citizens were enlisted, and the neutrality of the United States was thereby violated. A qualified apology was offered by Lord Clarendon; but the correspondence that ensued was conducted by Mr. Marcy, the United States Secretary, with considerable acrimony; and finally Sir John Crampton, our Minister at Washington, was recalled at the request of the Government of the United States, who asserted that he was implicated in the illegal enlistments. The British Government, feeling that they had been placed in a false position, determined to ignore the rebuke, and in the following year Lord Napier presented his credentials at Washington, and was duly received. As Lord Palmerston pointed out, when attacked in the House of Commons, it was useless to maintain the importance of friendly relations between England and America on the one hand, and to attempt to prove on the other that England had been insulted; and as the United States Government had finally acknowledged that they were satisfied with regard to the conduct of the British Government, though not with that of its agents, among whom they reckoned Sir John Crampton, it was unnecessary to adopt measures of retaliation.

Far more serious were the complications directly connected with the Treaty of Paris; and in spite of the secret Treaty of April 15th between Austria, France, and England, guaranteeing the existence of the Ottoman Empire—the *œuvre posthume* of the Congress, as Baron Brünnow called it—there seemed to be some considerable danger of a revival of hostilities. The con-

tingency was the more to be feared, because the Anglo-French alliance was for the moment non-existent. For the Czar, bitterly incensed at the part played by Austria in proposing the cession of Bessarabia, was making open overtures to Napoleon; and the Emperor of the French, flattered by the attentions of the autocrat, and surrounded by advisers like Morny and Walewski who were notoriously Russian in their proclivities, lent a ready ear to the voice of the charmer, more especially as he had received a rebuff from Austria in her refusal to take possession of the Principalities at his invitation. England, on her side, drew closer to Austria. The disruption of the European concert naturally gave Russia an opportunity for indulging in those pettifogging and vexatious evasions in the execution of treaties with which the name of Prince Gortschakoff will always be associated. "Russia," according to his well-known phrase, "was not sulking, she was only collecting herself together." Still she displayed the spirit of a beaten and angry school-boy in demolishing the fortifications of Kars, Ismail, and Reni, before surrendering them; in seizing Serpent's Island at the mouth of the Danube, though it was palpably within the new Bessarabian frontier; and in attempting to alter that line by insisting that it should be carried to the south, not of the old Bolgrad shown upon the map used at the Congress, but of a new Bolgrad, the existence of which was then for the first time made known to Europe.

Lord Palmerston was not the man to put up with chicanery of this sort. The evacuation of Kars was procured by the hint that if further delay took place no English representative should attend the Emperor's coronation. The despatch of a British fleet into the Black Sea, with an intimation in answer to Prince

Gortschakoff's complaints, that we considered that we were acting within our right, and would continue to act in the same manner should necessity arise, procured the surrender of Serpent's Island, and induced the Czar to offer a reasonable frontier line, which was accepted on the recommendation of Lord Clarendon. The only question that remained unsettled was that of the Danubian Principalities, and in handling it Lord Palmerston and Lord Clarendon displayed less than their usual sagacity.

When the Congress of Paris agreed that the constitution of the Principalities should be left for future settlement, after the report of a Special Commission had been considered, they acknowledged that the nut was hard to crack. At the same time, by agreeing that a Divan should be convoked by the Porte in each of the two provinces to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants, they recognised the right of those inhabitants to a certain voice in their own future. That decision arrived at, there could not be much doubt that France, Russia, and Sardinia were only logical in supporting the desire of the Wallachians and Moldavians for unity, a desire which only failed to find open expression because the Porte resorted to the desperate expedient of falsifying the returns of the Moldavian electoral lists. The views of the dissentient Governments, those of England, Austria, and Turkey, might be plausible, but they were certainly short-sighted. If the new State would never be strong enough, as Lord Palmerston appears to have thought—though wrongly—to become a barrier against Russia, even under a ruler chosen from one of the princely houses of Europe; none the less was the weakness of the divided Principalities certain to give Russia continued pretexts for intervention. And though he persuaded

the Emperor of the French, during his visit to Osborne in 1857, to yield on the question of union on condition that the Porte should be forced to annul the elections ; his designs were signally frustrated by the action of the Principalities themselves. By simultaneously electing Prince Couza for their ruler, they showed themselves signally indifferent to the paternal advice of England ; and though united Roumania fought on the side of Russia in the Turkish war of 1886, she has since found, contrary to Lord Palmerston's anticipations, that her true interests lie in an attitude of firm resistance to the imperious *sic volo sic jubeo* of the Divine Figure of the North.

The reconstruction of Europe alone did not give sufficient occupation to the Emperor's fantastic mind ; he was also busy with a project for dividing the Sick Man's heritage on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, through the occupation of Tunis by Sardinia, Morocco by France, and Egypt by England. But the last part of the plan, if carried into execution, would have been so extremely unpopular with the French nation, that it was almost certainly put forward as a mere blind ; in fact, the whole does not seem to have advanced beyond a very early stage of incubation. At any rate, Lord Palmerston had the good sense to reject it at once. How could England and France, he contended, who had just guaranteed the integrity of the Turkish Empire, proceed, like the partitioners of Poland, to strip the Sultan of his outlying dominions ? Besides, we did not want Egypt ; all that we wished was that the country should not belong to any other European Power, and that we should have a free passage across it. And it was the dread of the intervention of a European Power, particularly of France, which lay at the root of Lord

Palmerston's steady opposition to the Suez Canal scheme.

That opposition was of the most uncompromising character. Lord Cowley worked on the Emperor of the French, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe and Sir Henry Bulwer after him upon the Porte, with such good effect, that the firman authorising its constitution was not granted until after Lord Palmerston's death. His policy has been subjected to much ridicule, both at the time and since ; and the projector of the enterprise considered Lord Palmerston's objections so absurd, that, at an interview with the Prime Minister in April 1856, he could not help asking himself now and again whether he was in the presence of a maniac or a statesman.\* But M. de Lesseps might have reasonably come to the conclusion that Lord Palmerston was perfectly sane, though he was not an engineer, and did not fully grasp the financial side of the question. His objections, as far as they were made public, were based on three grounds ; that the canal was impracticable ; that, even if it were made, it would never be a financial success ; thirdly, that by rendering Egypt virtually independent of the Porte it would impair the integrity of the Turkish Empire.† But in his first conversation with M. de Lesseps the Prime Minister more than hinted at the real causes of his deeply-rooted hostility to the scheme, and they are explained at greater length in a letter to Lord John Russell, which is reproduced in the appendix to the first edition of Mr. Ashley's biography. They were—first, that a canal open to all nations would deprive England of the commercial monopoly with the

\* *Recollections of Forty Years*, by Ferdinand de Lesseps, vol. i p. 291.

† Speech in the House of Commons, July 7th, 1857.

East which she at present possessed. This prophecy has to a certain extent been falsified in the event, but it remains to be proved whether much of the commerce that by the old Cape route naturally found its way directly to London, will not be gradually drawn into Marseilles and other Mediterranean ports. But more important by far are the gravamina against the canal which are summed up in this passage :—

It requires only a glance at the map of the world to see how great would be the naval and military advantage to France in a war with England to have such a short cut to the Indian Seas, while we should be obliged to send ships round the Cape. Thouvenel proposes, indeed, that the passage of ships of war should be forbidden as at the Dardanelles; but I presume he does not expect us to receive such a proposal except with a decently suppressed smile. Of course the first week of a war between France and England would see 15,000 or 20,000 Frenchmen in possession of the canal, to keep it open for them and shut for us. But then, moreover, so strong a military barrier between Syria and Egypt would greatly add to the means of the Pasha for the time being to declare himself independent of Turkey, which would mean his being a dependent of France.

The course of events has modified the applicability of Lord Palmerston's conclusions a little, but only a little. For "France" most people would be inclined to read "Russia," as far as India is concerned, or possibly the two combined; but it should be remembered that when Lord Palmerston wrote, the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris were in force, and the Empire of the Czar had not yet emerged from the stage described by Prince Gortschakoff as that of "gathering herself together." And that the danger of Egypt becoming a dependency of France was not wholly chimerical, is shown by the recent efforts of English diplomacy to keep Napoleon's successors out of the country by Anglo-Turkish conventions, or to tie their hands by Dual Controls, not to speak of armies of occupation.

Upon one point Lord Palmerston's predictions are, if military authorities can be trusted at all, as true to-day as when they were written; and that is the complete inutility of the canal if we were at war with a first-class European Power, and the possibility of its being even used against us.

The Anglo-French alliance was preserved unbroken during the years immediately following the Crimean war, chiefly no doubt by the peculiarly intimate relations of the two courts. But the cordial friendship that existed between Lord Palmerston and Count Persigny, whom, as being one of the few honest men about him, the Emperor had the good sense to make his representative in London, contributed also to that result in no small degree. The Count may have been a man of few ideas, but he saw clearly enough that the friendship of England was a matter of life and death to the Second Empire, and that it was useless for the author of *Les Idées Napoléoniennes*, the advocate of the revision of the treaties of 1815, to imagine that diplomatic coquetry with Prussia and the German Federation was anything else than a mere waste of time. So far did he carry his English proclivities, that the Emperor, on the occasion of his visit to Osborne in 1857, complained to Prince Albert that Count Persigny always took the side of Lord Palmerston against his master; and there can be no doubt that the strength of will of these two vigorous men kept the Emperor for a time from drifting into dangerous courses. For though the hand of Walewski was to be seen in his policy with regard to the Principalities, that of Persigny was equally visible in the harmonious action of France and England in the quarrel between Prussia and Switzerland *ré* Neuchâtel, and still more in the measures dealt out to King Bomba

about the same time. The successive steps by which the necessity of treating British subjects with civility was inculcated upon the Neapolitan Sovereign, beginning with a visit of the British fleet in 1855 and ending with the recall of the French and English legations in 1856, were also thoroughly Palmerstonian; and Mr. Greville is probably not far wrong in ascribing to the “contagious” influence of the Prime Minister, several of Lord Clarendon’s apparently high-handed proceedings about this period. Prince Gortschakoff, as readers of Sir Theodore Martin are doubtless aware, issued a sarcastic protest against the interference of the Western Governments in the internal affairs of Naples. But it did not come with much consistency from the representative of the Power which had despatched the Menschikoff mission; and the British Ministers could plead with justice that King Bomba, during their long acquaintance with him, had been invariably deaf to good advice, but singularly amenable to coercion.

In one of the two little wars, those with Persia and China, in which England became involved after the Crimean war, the influence of Russia is no doubt to a considerable extent discernible, though probably not so much as Lord Palmerston imagined. He was, of course, well aware that overtures for the assistance of Persia had been made at Teheran by the Russian envoy, Prince Dolgorouki, before the outbreak of hostilities with Russia, and that to the wise counsels of the Persian Vizier was almost entirely to be ascribed the rejection of the Russian alliance and the attitude of friendly neutrality towards the Western Powers ultimately adopted by the Shah. But he was probably mistaken in imagining that Russian intrigue was at the bottom of the sudden change of policy adopted by the

Vizier when the war was nearly over; and that functionary was in all probability actuated by no loftier motive than that of saving his own neck from the wrath of the Shah, when he picked a quarrel with the English Minister, Mr. Murray, and, after diplomatic relations had been suspended, sent an expedition against Herat in direct violation of the agreement made with England in 1853. But whether the attack on the key of India was, as Lord Palmerston suspected, "the first opening of the trenches against India by Russia," or whether it was simply the act of a man situated between the Devil and the deep sea, it had in either case to be avenged. The peace concluded after a war conducted on the principle of dealing gently with the Shah, lest his empire should crumble to pieces, is remarkable for the genuine attempt to create the "strong, united, and friendly Afghanistan" of Lord Beaconsfield's dreams, by compelling His Majesty to surrender all his claims over that country, and for an arrangement for the suppression of the slave trade in the Persian Gulf, which proved that age had not weakened Lord Palmerston's generous instincts.

The Persian war is perhaps of all our little wars that to which it is least possible to raise serious objections. The Chinese war must appear to most people difficult to justify on the grounds either of morality or expediency. In the dispute which arose over the little lorcha "Arrow," Sir John Bowring, Governor of Hong-Kong, seems to have displayed a lamentable lack of judgment; to have forced on a quarrel in a case where the *civis Romanus sum* doctrine could not by any possibility be applied; to have refused ample amends; and to have chosen a moment when the irritation between the two nations was at its height to put forward demands under

a treaty which he must have known that the Chinese hated exceedingly, and the non-execution of which he had been expressly ordered not to make a *casus belli*. If ever the maxim that British agents must be supported was to be broken through, the "Arrow" affair seemed a case in which a recall would have been advisable. Lord Palmerston, however, resolved to stand by Bowring, and he pointed out, with considerable show of reason, in answer to a motion of Mr. Cobden's which the Government determined to treat as one of censure, that to yield to the Chinese Commissioner Yeh, would be "a virtual casting off of the British communities in China." But the speech, taken as a whole, was not one of his happiest efforts. It contained some personalities at the expense of Mr. Cobden, containing, perhaps, a substratum of truth, but at the same time extremely exaggerated. Upon the merits and demerits of the actual case of the "Arrow" the Prime Minister was extremely hazy, and his main point was that it was only one of many acts of deliberate violation of our treaty rights, and that "the animus of an insult, the animus of violation of the treaty was in the Chinese, and you had a right to demand not only an apology for the wrong that was done, but an assurance that it should not be repeated." In short, that it was about time that the Chinese had another "exemplary licking."

The Government expected defeat, and had made up their minds to appeal to the country. The latter part of Lord Palmerston's speech accordingly contained a stirring election appeal—"very bow-wow," as Greville says, but very skilful—in which he declaimed against the coalition of Radicals, Peelites, and Conservatives. Just before the dissolution which followed the de-

feat of the Government by a majority of 16, Mr. Cobden attempted to give Lord Palmerston a lesson in electioneering. The last rag of the old reform banner, he said, had recently been trampled under foot, Lord Palmerston having voted against Mr. Locke King's motion for, that "miserable modicum of reform," a £10 county franchise, and now he was going to the country with the cry, "Palmerston for ever! No reform! and a Chinese war!" He was simply playing into the hands of the Conservatives. But the Prime Minister, whose character was in itself so perfect a representation of the faults as well as the virtues of the nation, was far more capable of reading the heart of the people than Mr. Cobden, whom the bulk of the constituencies probably regarded as a doctrinaire who was generally hard to understand and sometimes positively wearisome. As a matter of fact, the constituencies did not care two straws about reform; they approved of the Chinese war, as Mr. Disraeli foresaw they would. They fairly adored "old Pam," and agreed with him in regarding the combination of Conservatives, Peelites, and Radicals as actuated by motives of faction. But their abomination was the Manchester school, which was wiped off the face of the earth. Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Milner Gibson all suffered defeat, and it was calculated that Government had gained twenty-four counties and twenty towns. As Mr. Morley points out, nothing like the overthrow had been seen since the disappearance of the Peace Whigs in 1812.

The confidence which the English people reposed in Lord Palmerston as a man in whose hands its honour was safe, was, on the whole, thoroughly justified by the mein with which he confronted the Indian Mutiny. It is impossible, indeed, to read the correspondence be-

tween Premier and Sovereign, published by Sir Theodore Martin, without coming to the conclusion that at the outset he undervalued the danger very considerably, and that it was fortunate for the nation that Prince Albert was at hand to point out the perils of a jaunty optimism. However, when he was fully awake to the greatness of the occasion, his proceedings were characterised by his usual dash and promptitude, while his cheeriness upheld the spirit of the nation. He pitched on the right man, when Sir Colin Campbell was sent out to India and to take the vacant place of Commander-in-Chief; when, as the Premier subsequently informed a delighted House of Commons, upon being asked when he would be able to start, the gallant officer, with his ordinary promptitude, replied "To-morrow." And the sentiments which dictated Lord Palmerston to refuse the proffered assistance from Belgium, under full confidence that England could "win off her own bat," were thoroughly English and great; as also was his intimation at the Mansion House to "any foreign nation" that "it would not be a safe game to play to take advantage of that which is erroneously imagined to be the moment of our weakness."

Even the overthrow of Lord Palmerston in the following year on the Conspiracy to Murder Bill, introduced on the occasion of the Orsini attempt on Napoleon III., was not followed by a withdrawal of popular favour, and was probably due simply to mismanagement. The opinion naturally prevailed in the House of Commons that the author of the *civis Romanus sum* speech was not seen at his best when modifying the criminal law of England at the bidding of a foreign potentate; and the measure was never particularly popular. But the first reading was carried by 299 to

99, and it is certain that had it not been for the violence of the language across the water, and the unfortunate neglect of Lord Clarendon to send a formal reply to Count Walewski's hectoring despatch, the subsequent course of the measure would have been equally prosperous. Even under the circumstances, defeat might have been avoided if the Government whips had been alive to the critical nature of the division ; and if Lord Palmerston had consented to adjourn the debate in order to allow passions to cool and the necessary explanations to be made—explanations which, when they were eventually forthcoming, were acknowledged by Lord Derby to be perfectly satisfactory. So unlike Palmerston's usual tactics was the lack of resource he displayed on the occasion, that many observers thought that the whole affair was a *fausse sortie* ; and that he preferred to resign on the Conspiracy to Murder Bill rather than on the impending question of the extremely unpopular appointment of Lord Clanricarde to the Privy Seal, an appointment which Lord Brougham had forewarned Lady Palmerston would "damn the Ministry." Mr. Greville, however, rejects that explanation ; and as Sir George Cornewall Lewis never hinted at it in his conversations with the Clerk of the Council, it is pretty certain that he was right in his conclusions, and that Lord Palmerston fell through one of those errors of judgment to which all mortals are prone. In any case, he was quite right to abstain from retaining power after the discredit of a defeat. For the Conservative party took little by entering into office ; and the period of opposition to which the Liberal party was condemned, was of infinite value in the healing of internal dissensions.

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## CHAPTER XII.

## LORD PALMERSTON AND ITALY.

1848-1861.

The Willis's Rooms meeting—Defeat of Lord Derby's ministry—Lord Palmerston and Azeglio—The Sardinian Contingent—The Congress of Paris—The mission of Kossuth—The treaty of Villa-franca—Policy of the English Cabinet—The cession of Nice and Savoy—Lord Palmerston's efforts on behalf of Italy—His speech on the death of Cavour.

WHILE the second Derby administration kept in power through the divisions of their opponents and the supreme skill with which they were led by Mr. Disraeli, the most important debates as far as the Liberal party was concerned were, not those heard in the House of Commons, but those in the aristocratic halls of Woburn Abbey and Broadlands. The main objects of the negotiators were to effect a reconciliation between the two kings of Brentwood, Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston, and at the same time to frame a programme sufficiently large to secure the support of the Radical and Peelite groups. The reader must consult the pages of Greville if he wishes to obtain a detailed knowledge of the moves and counter-moves of the Whig party managers, male and female; and it is enough to say here, that although the dissolution of 1859 gave a considerable accession of strength to the Conservatives,

it was not enough to counterbalance the effect of the reunion of the Liberal party accomplished at the Willis's Rooms meeting of June 6th. There Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell announced that each was willing to serve under the other in the event of either being sent for, and the course of conduct agreed upon received the support of men of such varied shades of opinion as Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Mr. Milner Gibson, and Mr. Sidney Herbert.

The amendment to the Address moved by Lord Hartington, upon which Ministers were defeated by a majority of thirteen, was a general vote of want of confidence. But the debate turned almost entirely on the war of Italian Liberation ; and Lord Malmesbury had no doubt whatever that the overthrow of the Conservative Ministry might have been postponed, if Mr. Disraeli had not omitted to lay on the table of the House the Blue Book containing the Italian and French correspondence with the Foreign Office. Not only was the future of Italy the question of the hour, but it was the question which divided the Liberals the least. The three most powerful men of the reunited party, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Gladstone, were all definitely anti-Austrian in their views ; and the decidedly pronounced Italian sympathies of the first and second of the trio caused Lady William Russell to bestow upon them the happy sobriquet of the “old Italian masters.”

Lord Palmerston had, in truth, been consistently faithful to the Italians ever since the temporary overthrow of their aspirations in 1848. He early recognised the genius of Cavour ; and both he and Lady Palmerston were on terms of the warmest intimacy with the Marquis Emanuel d'Azeglio, the astute

diplomatist who represented Sardinian interests in London with such striking ability during the important decade from 1851 to 1861. That friendship was of considerable importance to the Italian cause, and the value of his services can be traced in the series of highly interesting letters from Cavour to Azeglio, recently published by M. Nicomède Bianchi under the title of *La Politique du Comte Camille de Cavour*. The machinations of the Machiavellian Piedmontese seem, indeed, to have embraced the whole of the family circle of Broadlands. Not only were "private" despatches doctored for the purpose of being laid on the table of Milady, but Lord Shaftesbury was favoured with stories of Jesuitical atrocities, which were reproduced with great effect in Exeter Hall,\* as Victor Emmanuel discovered when in 1856 the English people received him with the honours of a Protestant hero. It is probable, however, that both Lord Palmerston and his agent, Sir James Hudson, the British Minister at Turin, were too well acquainted with the rules of diplomacy not to be able to distinguish grain from chaff. Both men were *Italianissimi*; and both were simply acting in agreement with their inclinations in advocating the despatch of the Sardinian contingent to the Crimea on the understanding that the representatives of the monarchy should be allowed to discuss "Sardinian interests" at the peace negotiations, and both were fully aware that by so doing they were giving a great access of importance to Sardinia. Lord Palmerston even went so far as to adopt a plan hatched by Napoleon during the Congress of Paris for the acquisition of the Duchy of Parma by Sardinia through a process of shuffling the

\* "Ménagez toujours ce bon Shaft," wrote Cavour to Azeglio and his letters are full of similar admonitions.

petty potentates of Europe, and to reproduce it by a process of unconscious cerebration as his own. The Duke of Modena was to become King of Greece in place of Otho; the Duchess of Parma was to move on to Modena; Parma was to be annexed to Sardinia. He seems, indeed, to have taken the project far more seriously than Cavour, who was content to have laid the Italian question on the diplomatic carpet. Lord Clarendon's speech on the wickedness of the Papal and Neapolitan governments at the last meeting of the Congress "broke the windows," as Cavour wrote, but he was well aware that "cannon alone could settle the business."

Some letters purporting to be by Cavour, and published after his death, attempted to fix upon Lord Clarendon the responsibility of having promised the Sardinian Government the material assistance of England in the event of war between Austria and Italy. But as Lord Clarendon promptly gave the statement an explicit denial in the House of Lords, and as there is not a single line of confirmatory evidence to be found in the peculiarly confidential correspondence between Cavour and Azeglio, it was certainly false. Whether the letters were concocted after Cavour's death, or for some special purpose at the time when they pretended to be written, there can hardly be a doubt that the English Foreign Secretary, whose proclivities were in the main Austrian, did not commit the Liberal party to anything more than extremely warm expressions of sympathy with the Italian cause. Indeed, Cavour always disliked "our friend with the chin," as he termed Lord Clarendon, but he seems to have had too much knowledge of mankind to attempt to sow dissension between him and the Prime Minister. Palmerston, on his side, more than once told Azeglio that the English

Parliament would not sanction armed intervention for the Italian cause; and though Cavour was of considerable service to the English Ministry in the settlement of the Bolgrad difficulty, he had, in 1858, long after he had secured Napoleon at Plombières, given up all hopes of assistance from England.

We cannot hope [he writes to d'Azeglio on the 1st of December] to modify the policy of England in our favour. She has become Austrian, and we must go our own way. Salvagnoli has repeated to me his conversations with Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell. They are, in words at least, a hundred times worse than the Tories.

So much for the falsehood, circulated at the time and since repeated, that Lord Palmerston, if he had been in office, would have plunged England into a Quixotic expedition for the liberation of Italy. The Emperor of the French, by inviting Clarendon and Palmerston to Compiègne during the closing days of 1858, may have wished to entangle them in his widely-ramified schemes; but if so, he was singularly unsuccessful, as Lord Clarendon's language was most outspoken. And Napoleon's object in sending the credulous Kossuth, after the downfall of the Derby Cabinet, on the extraordinary mission to London, which the latter has described in his *Memories of My Exile*, was nothing more than to secure the neutrality of England if the Hungarians took part in the movement as well as the Italians. The mission, in fact, amounted to little more than preaching to the converted, since Palmerston never had the slightest intention of fighting *on the side* of Austria. As he was obliged to purchase Radical support in any case, he probably did not think twice about giving his consent to the three points submitted to him by Kossuth's friend, Mr. Gilpin, in the name of the Radical party, (1) the overthrow of the 'Tory Ministry

on their foreign policy ; (2) the absolute neutrality of England during the war, whatever its developments might be ; (3) the admission of two members of the Radical party into the Ministry “in order to ensure their neutrality.” Everybody was satisfied, and Kossuth had been given something to occupy his time and tongue.

The Italian campaign was nearly over, when, on the failure of Lord Granville to form a ministry, and thereby to relieve the Queen of the “invidious, unwelcome task” of making a choice between Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, the former became for the second time First Lord of the Treasury, with the latter for his Foreign Secretary. By the 20th of June the ministerial arrangements were complete ; on the 21st the last pitched battle of the war was fought at Solferino, and the Austrians retreated into the Quadrilateral. Suddenly the Emperor determined to bring the contest to a close. His victories had been Pyrrhic ; the Quadrilateral defied him as it had defied Carlo Alberto. Prussia, which had refrained from taking the side of Austria solely from the discourteous manner in which her aid was demanded, was reported to be arming rapidly ; Italy showed no disposition to content herself with that measure of liberty which he had proposed—“ freedom from the Alps to the Adriatic ”—but was evidently determined to be at liberty from north to south, as well as west by east. Napoleon’s attempt to drag England into the struggle by invoking her mediation on terms which, as Lord Palmerston pointed out to Lord John, Austria would peremptorily refuse,\* having

\* They included the surrender of Lombardy and the Duchies to Sardinia, and the erection of Venetia into an independent state under an archduke.

failed, the world was suddenly startled by the news that the two Emperors had signed a provisional treaty of peace at Villafranca, under which Sardinia was to content herself with Lombardy; the Grand Dukes of Tuscany and Parma were to be reinstated, though there was a verbal assurance that force would not be employed for the purpose; and Venetia, retained by Austria, was to become a member of an Italian Confederation, presided over by the Pope. "L'Italie rendue à elle-même," was Lord Palmerston's subsequent comment, "had become l'Italie vendue à l'Autriche"; and without loss of time he wrote to Count Persigny that when once Austria became a member, through her hold on Venetia, of an Italian Confederation, all Italy was given up to Austria with feet and hands bound.

As to the conduct of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell at this exceedingly difficult juncture, there are naturally diversities of opinion. Sir Theodore Martin says that there was considerable cause for anxiety lest the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary would "be carried into some imprudence by their enthusiasm for the Italian cause," and the neutrality of England violated. Mr. Ashley combats that view, and his case, so far as the protest to Persigny goes, is exceedingly strong. The Prime Minister did not, as the biographer of the Prince Consort attempts to argue, tell the French Government that they ought to break the peace; all he said was that the arrangement was bad, and that England would have nothing to do with it. Nor can he be blamed, when Central Italy had plainly expressed her determination to take her destinies into her own hands, when the duchies had flatly declined to receive back their petty Sovereigns and Romagna its Pope, for making it clearly known that England would

consider unjustifiable the “employment of French or Austrian forces to put down the clearly expressed will of the people of Central Italy.” But when the Emperor, perplexed by the impossibility of executing the terms of the provisional Treaty of Villafranca as notified at Zurich, pressed for the summoning of a European Congress to extricate him from his difficulties, Lord Palmerston’s conduct becomes decidedly more open to question. It was evidently the duty of England, as a neutral Power, to keep in the background, to make no attempt to meddle with the problem which she had not created, and any intervention might, as the Queen pointed out to Lord John Russell, have the effect of “forcing Austria and France to make common cause against her.” So great, however, was the Prime Minister’s indignation at the Treaty of Villafranca, and so firm his trust in the good faith of the Emperor, that he had already written to Count Persigny a “private” letter—the old Adam peeped out there—urging that the clause of the preliminaries of peace at Villafranca relating to the duchies ought not to find a place in the Treaty of Zurich, and that it was in the interests of France that they should annex themselves to Sardinia. The retort of the French Government was obvious; there would be no peace unless the condition about the duchies were retained, and if Austria took up arms again, France was not prepared to make further sacrifices unless England would join the Franco-Sardinian alliance. Undeterred by this rebuff, both Palmerston and Lord John Russell during the autumn months recurred more than once to the idea of a Congress, and in January 1860 the Prime Minister actually laid before the Cabinet a memorandum in which he proposed a triple alliance between England, France, and Sardinia, with “a joint determination

to prevent any forcible interference by any other Power in the affairs of Italy.

Of course, it was more than probable that Austria would not dare to face such a coalition; on the other hand, the promise of strict neutrality made at the Willis's Rooms meeting had been thrown to the winds, and it was fortunate that these councils did not prevail on the Cabinet. For when Lord Palmerston penned the memorandum, the Congress had been foredoomed by the agreement of the French Emperor to the proposal of the English Government that the duchies should be allowed to vote their own destinies, and Napoleon soon afterwards gave the project its death-blow by his famous pamphlet *Le Pape et le Congrès*. Indeed, the rumours that the Emperor was now determined to insist on the cession of Nice and Savoy to France, according to the original terms of the compact of Plombières, should have convinced the English Cabinet that a common line of action with France on the Italian question was no longer possible; and on the 5th of February, Lord Cowley's letter to Lord John Russell placed the intention of the French monarch to set himself right in the eyes of his subjects by extending France "to her natural frontiers" beyond any farther doubt.

That Lord Palmerston should have been indignant at the tricky conduct of Napoleon, who had completely blinded the English Cabinet by his assertions that the Italian war was "for an idea," and that France sought in it no selfish aggrandisement, was but natural. At the same time, he was too experienced to attempt a protest against the annexation, when the Northern Powers showed no disposition to stir in the matter, and when Cavour, who, despite his theatrical *Après avoir donné*

*lu fille, on pourrait bien donner le berceau,* was well content to have gained Central Italy at the price of the cession of the French-speaking districts of Nice and Savoy, showed no disposition to draw back from the bargain. Still, though it was impossible any longer to co-operate with France, in the cause of Italian unity, Lord Palmerston did not cease to help the peninsula as best he could single-handed. When Garibaldi, having freed Sicily, was about to cross over to Naples, the Emperor of the French wished to prevent him ; but his request for the co-operation of the English fleet was met with a curt refusal. And when Garibaldi's romantic campaign was over, and he had handed over the two Sicilies to Victor Emmanuel, the English Government, alone in Europe, hastened to recognise the new kingdom of Italy.

The Italian revolution [wrote Lord John Russell to Sir James Hudson on October 27th, 1860] has been conducted with singular temper and forbearance. The subversion of existing power has not been followed, as is too often the case, by an outburst of popular vengeance. The venerated forms of constitutional monarchy have been associated with the name of a prince who represents an ancient and glorious dynasty. . . . Her Majesty's Government can see no sufficient ground for the severe censure with which Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia have visited the acts of the King of Sardinia [by withdrawing their ministers from Turin]. Her Majesty's Government will turn their eyes rather to the gratifying prospect of a people building up the edifices of their liberties amid the sympathies and good wishes of Europe.

The Emperor of the French also was warned that the Savoy *coup* must not be repeated ; and that the British fleet would at once be sent to the scene of action, if the Emperor attempted to compensate France for the creation of a powerful kingdom on her borders by the annexation of Genoa or Sardinia. The expediency of withdrawing the army of occupation from Rome was

urged by him upon the Emperor again and again; but without effect, since Napoleon did not dare to affront French clericalism. Lord Palmerston even entertained the idea, and urged it more than once on the Italian Cabinet, that Venetia should be acquired by purchase from Austria. But the proposal was rejected as impracticable, and another war with Austria had to be undergone before Italy could recover Venetia.

The death of Count Cavour gave Lord Palmerston an opportunity of paying a fine tribute to his memory, and of placing thereby on record his own generous sympathies with the cause of Italian unity. In a speech in the House of Commons on June 6th, 1861, he said that of Count Cavour "it might truly be said that he had left a name 'to point a moral and adorn a tale.'"

The moral is this—that a man of transcendant talents, of indomitable energy, and of inextinguishable patriotism, may, by the impulses which his own mind may give his countrymen, aiding a righteous cause and seizing favourable opportunities, notwithstanding difficulties that appear at first sight insurmountable, confer on his country great and most inestimable benefits. . . . The tale with which Count Cavour's memory will be associated is one of the most extraordinary—I may say one of the most romantic in the history of the world. Under his influence, we have seen a people who were supposed to have become torpid in the enjoyment of luxury, to have been enervated by the pursuit of pleasure, and to have had no knowledge or feeling in politics except what may have been derived from the traditions of their history and the jealousies of rival states—we have seen that people, under his guidance and at his call, rising from the slumber of ages, breaking that spell with which they had so long been bound, and displaying on just occasions the courage of heroes, the sagacity of statesmen, the wisdom of philosophers, and obtaining for themselves that unity of political existence which for centuries has been denied them. I say, these are great events in history, and that the man whose name will go down in connection with them to posterity, whatever may have been the period of his death, however premature it may have been for the hopes of his countrymen, cannot be said to have died too soon for his glory and fame.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## HOME AFFAIRS.

1859-1865.

Lord Palmerston's Second Cabinet—His relations with the Radicals and the Opposition—The Reform Bill—Lord Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone—The Paper Duties Bill—His views on the National Defences—The Fortifications Bill—Legislation and Appointments—The Charges commonly brought against Lord Palmerston's Government—His Irish Policy.

THE administration formed by Lord Palmerston in June 1859 was, in point of ability, perhaps the strongest that had been entrusted with the affairs of the nation since the famous ministry “of All the Talents” collected under the leadership of Grenville and Fox in 1806.\* Lord John Russell's fixed determination to

\* Lord Palmerston's second Cabinet was composed as follows:—

First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Palmerston.

Lord Chancellor, Lord Campbell.

President of the Council, Earl Granville.

Lord Privy Seal, The Duke of Argyll.

Home Secretary, Sir G. Cornewall Lewis.

Foreign Secretary, Lord John Russell.

Colonial Secretary, The Duke of Newcastle.

Secretary for War, Mr. Sidney Herbert.

Secretary for India, Sir Charles Wood.

have the Foreign Office and nothing else, was the cause of the exclusion of Lord Clarendon, a loss, perhaps, less to be regretted than it would otherwise have been, because of the Italian complication. Sir James Graham, during the brief remainder of his life, played the congenial part of the candid friend of Liberalism. Mr. Cobden refused to listen to the voice of the siren, and declined the presidency of the Board of Trade. Otherwise, the Ministry was composed of the flower of the Peelites, Whigs, and Radicals, as a glance at the list below will show. But though an extremely able administration, it was composed of the most discordant elements, and was in fact, far more of a coalition than Lord Aberdeen's government. Its three most important members, the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, and Mr. Gladstone, were, as we have said in the previous chapter, in thorough accord on the Italian question, and it is pleasant to see the cordiality with which the two veterans, after years of "tit-for-tat" and "paying one another out," worked together in the shaping of our relations with the continental powers in the autumn of their days. But Lord John and Lord

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Gladstone.

First Lord of the Admiralty, The Duke of Somerset.

President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Milner Gibson.

Postmaster-General, Lord Elgin.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Sir George Grey.

Chief Commissioner of the Poor Law Board, The Hon. Charles Villiers.

Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Cardwell.

Lord Carlisle was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Mr. James Wilson Vice-President of the Board of Trade and Paymaster of the Forces; Mr. Lowe, Vice-President of the Council; Sir Richard Bethell (Lord Westbury), Attorney-General, and, on the death of Lord Campbell in 1861, Lord Chancellor.

Palmerston were, of course, of entirely different minds on the question of Reform ; the Prime Minister and Mr. Gladstone fell out about the national defences. There was a large section of the Cabinet who regarded the Premier as little better than a Tory in disguise, and another which utterly distrusted his foreign policy. That Lord Palmerston should have held such a body of men together until his death, with considerably less than the average number of resignations, is perhaps the greatest of his feats as a parliamentary manager. And critics who accuse him of degrading political life by shelving important questions and so forth, should remember that daring tactics are impossible when a general is surrounded by a divided staff.

The difficulties with which Lord Palmerston had to contend were increased by the confusion that prevailed among the rank and file of both parties. As has occurred very frequently in our political history, the real divisions did not coincide with the sections into which parties nominally fell ; the gulf between Lord Palmerston and the Conservatives was far narrower than that between Lord Palmerston and the Cobdenites, and as the ministerial majority was not very large, the defection of the latter was a most dangerous eventuality. Lord Palmerston's real strength lay accordingly in the strange fact that while the Radicals were, as several of Mr. Cobden's letters prove, speculating eagerly on his approaching downfall, the Conservatives on the other hand, having had more than enough of office in a minority, were anxious that he should remain in power until they had a chance of coming in on a full tide. If, under the circumstances, Lord Palmerston had actually made overtures for the support of the Opposition against his nominal friends, the step should be blameworthy

only in the eyes of the mere political hack, who affects to think that his party has the monopoly of the cardinal virtues. But Mr. Ashley distinctly denies that there was any secret understanding—of a permanent nature as we understand him—and that the most that happened was that when Lord Malmesbury gratuitously offered to Lady Palmerston, in the name of Lord Derby, the support of the Conservative party, in the event of the resignations of Lord John Russell on Reform and of Mr. Gladstone on the Paper Duties Bill, for the remainder of the session of 1860, the offer was gratefully accepted. A transaction which, if carried into effect, would have thwarted the wrecking of a Government to further the desires of individuals, appears to be distinctly creditable to both parties concerned.

Lord John Russell's advocacy of Reform was less determined than Mr. Gladstone's opposition to the expenditure on the defences, and was disposed of by Lord Palmerston by the simple device of letting him have his way. On the 1st of March 1860, the anniversary of the great measure which he had introduced twenty-nine years before, the Foreign Secretary brought in a Bill of which the effect was to lower the franchise from £10 to £6, and to redistribute twenty-five seats. But he soon found that the country cared little about the Bill, the House still less, and it perished in Committee. Lord Palmerston's speech was, as Mr. Disraeli said, very happily, "not so much in support of, as about" the Reform Bill; and in his reports to the Queen he made little or no attempt to conceal his satisfaction at its approaching demise. In fact, his whole course of action was one of most judicious expediency. Even Lord John Russell was compelled to acknowledge that "the apathy of the country was undeniably, nor was it a transient humour."

This the Radicals too discovered when they stumped the North of England on the question. If it had been set aside for the moment, the Prime Minister said, in 1862, in answer to Mr. Cobden, it was owing in a great degree to the feeling of the House of Commons; it was owing in a still greater degree to the general feeling of the constituencies in the country; and it was most eminently owing to the course pursued in regard to the question by Mr. Cobden himself and Mr. Bright, for there was no denying that the tone which was taken on the subject by many of those who advocated the question had the effect of weaning from it those who were formerly most anxious for it. "Why do we not bring in a Reform Bill?" said Lord Palmerston to Rowcliffe at Tiverton; "because we are not geese." The truth of the inference is undeniable, and it does not necessarily imply that Lord Palmerston imagined that he had thrust aside Parliamentary Reform for an indefinite period. All that he meant was that the question was not ripe for solution at the moment.

The questions at issue between Lord Palmerston and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were less easy of solution. There seems to have been a certain want of personal cordiality between the two men. Lord Shaftesbury has placed on record the old Premier's saying concerning his ambitious lieutenant, "He has never behaved to me as a colleague." But affairs of State were almost certainly the *causa causans* of their differences. Lord Palmerston distrusted the approximation of his colleague to Radicalism. "Gladstone will soon have it all his own way," he told Lord Shaftesbury, "and, whenever he gets my place, we shall have strange doings." The Chancellor, on the other hand, naturally felt bitterly annoyed at the temporary annihilation

of most of the good effects of the commercial treaty negotiated by Mr. Cobden and the Emperor, a treaty in which he took the utmost interest, by the deep distrust entertained by the Prime Minister towards the "Sphinx of the Seine" in 1860 and onwards. He had to submit to the temporary abandonment of one of his most popular measures for lightening the burdens upon the people at the bidding of the House of Lords, and for purposes of constructing coast-defences and ironclads. He seems also to have agreed with the Radicals in stigmatising what Palmerston called a policy of defence as one of defiance. So completely were his views at variance with those of the Prime Minister that Mr. Cobden was of opinion that he ought to have left the Cabinet.

The rejection of the Paper Duties Bill by the House of Lords was undoubtedly prompted by patriotic motives, and not, as was systematically stated at the time, by a bigoted desire to hinder the spread of knowledge among the people. The chief reason for the temporary unpopularity of the Cobden commercial treaty was that it cheapened the necessities of war, coal and iron, for our possible antagonists; and for similar reasons, the opinion prevailed that when war was in sight, the voluntary abandonment of a source of revenue which brought in over a million and a quarter a year was most inexpedient. In fact, their action was dictated entirely by prudential considerations; and if an important constitutional question, whether the Upper House had the right to reject a money-tax, was raised, it was raised only incidentally. Public opinion approved of the conduct of the Upper House, because it held that they had consulted wisely for the interests of the moment; and Lord Palmerston was in thorough concord with the nation, as

Greville suspected and Lord Malmesbury knew, though he was compelled by the necessities of his position to veil his satisfaction under an air of assumed displeasure. His management of the dispute in its later stages was masterly in the extreme. By appointing a committee of the House of Commons to consider the validity of Lord Lyndhurst's contention that the House of Lords had a right to reject, though not to originate or alter money Bills, he gave the angry passions of the Radical party time to cool; while the purely historical character of the report of the committee served as a useful basis for the judicious resolutions which, while asserting that the House of Lords had acted within their right, upheld the privileges of the Commons in a manner which even Mr. Gladstone acknowledged was "mild and temperate but firm."

The more general question of the necessity of spending millions on the fortifications of the coast caused still greater friction in the Cabinet. In 1860, Lord Palmerston wrote to the Queen that "however great the loss to the Government by the retirement of Mr. Gladstone, it would be better to lose Mr. Gladstone than to run the risk of losing Portsmouth or Plymouth"; and when the Fortifications Bill was introduced, the Chancellor of the Exchequer reserved for himself the right to take what course he pleased in the following year, a course which the Prime Minister described to Her Majesty as likely to be one of "ineffectual opposition and ultimate acquiescence." And in 1861, Mr. Gladstone, in his Budget speech, commented on the nation's "increased susceptibility to excitement, in our proneness to constant and apparently boundless augmentations of expenditure." He was thus thoroughly in agreement with Cobden, who, on July 10th,

1860, wrote an able letter to Lord Palmerston urging the postponement of the fortification scheme, and in 1862 forwarded to the Premier a memorandum in which he suggested that the Governments of England and France should come to an understanding about the number of ships of war which each of the two countries should maintain.

The Prime Minister's counter arguments are to be found in Mr. Ashley's biography, and may be summarised here as far as they deal with the general principles of coast defence. In a letter dated December 1859, he pointed out to Mr. Gladstone how liable to invasion England was. One night, he wrote, is enough for the passage to our coast, and twenty thousand men might be landed simultaneously at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and in Ireland, with the result that our dockyards would be destroyed before twenty thousand men could be got together to defend either of them. Or the manœuvre of the first Napoleon might be repeated and a large French fleet with troops on board despatched to the West Indies. Were we then to leave our colonies to their fate, or were we to go in pursuit, leaving our coast bare in case the French doubled back? In April 1862, in a letter to the same, he denied that England was acting under the influence of panic.

Panic there has been none on the part of anybody. There was for a long time an apathetic blindness on the part of the governed and the governors as to the defensive means of the country compared with the offensive means acquired and acquiring by other Powers. The country at last woke up from its lethargy, not, indeed, to rush into extravagance and uncalled-for exertions, but to make up gradually for former omissions, and so far, no doubt, to throw upon a shorter period of time expenses which earlier foresight might have spread over a greater length of time. The Government, the Parliament, and the nation acted in harmonious concert; and if any proof were wanting that the nation has been inspired by a deliberate

and sagacious appreciation of its position with respect to other Powers, that proof has been afforded by the long-continued and well-sustained sacrifices of time and money which have been made by the 160,000 volunteers, and by those who have contributed to supply them with requisite funds.

To Mr. Cobden's proposal for a mutual limitation of armaments the Prime Minister only sent the most general reply.

It would be very delightful [he wrote] if your Utopia could be realised, and if the nations of the earth would think of nothing but peace and commerce, and would give up quarrelling and fighting altogether. But, unfortunately, man is a fighting and quarrelling animal; and that this is human nature is proved by the fact that republics where the masses govern, are far more quarrelsome and more addicted to fighting than monarchies, which are governed by comparatively few persons. But so long as other nations are animated by these human passions, a country like England, wealthy, and exposed to attack, must by necessity be provided with the means of defence, and however dear these means may be, they are infinitely cheaper than the war which they tend to keep off.

The speech,\* in which Palmerston proposed the raising of nine millions to be spent in fortifying the dockyards, contained a remarkable account of the dangers to which the country was exposed, which is not without interest at the present moment. Invasion, he said, might be made for three purposes, first, with the hope of conquest, which he thought no foreign country would imagine to be possible; secondly, to get possession of London, and there levy contributions or dictate an ignominious peace. This kind of attack could only be resisted by an army in the field. London was too vast a space to be surrounded by fortifications, and there were strong natural positions between it and the coast which could be successfully held by a large force. The size of some of the great harbours, Liverpool and New-

\* July 23rd, 1860.

castle for instance, made it also extremely difficult to fortify them, but they could be defended by batteries from the only kind of attack to which they were liable—the attack of small squadrons for purposes of mischief and for levying contributions. But the operation which he apprehended was most likely to be attempted, was that of landing a considerable force for the purpose of destroying our dockyards.

If your dockyards are destroyed, your navy is cut up by the roots. If any naval action were then to take place, your enemy, whatever the success of it might be, would have his dockyards, arsenals, and stores to refit and replenish and reconstruct his navy; while, with your dockyards burned and your stores destroyed, you would have no means of refitting your navy and sending it out to battle. If ever we lose the command of the sea, what becomes of this country? Only let hon. gentlemen compare how dependent we are for everything that constitutes national wealth—aye, and a large portion of national food, on free communication by sea. We import about ten million quarters of corn annually, besides enormous quantities of coffee, sugar, and tea and cotton, which is next to corn for the support of the people by enabling them to earn their food. Our wealth depends on the exportation of the products of our industry, which we exchange for those things which are necessary for our social position. Our exports amount to considerably more than one hundred millions in value annually. Picture to yourselves for a moment such places as Liverpool, Bristol, Glasgow, and London, that is to say the Thames, blockaded by a hostile force.

The resistance offered by the Prime Minister to the cry of economy in military and naval expenditure, even when raised by the most important member of his Cabinet, is assuredly much to his credit. And it should be remembered also that, if he played no active part in the great financial triumphs of his second administration, the Cobden treaty and Mr. Gladstone's budgets, he at any rate sympathised thoroughly with their objects as far as they were purely commercial and did not interfere

with the naval and military strength of England. The budgets alone are enough to absolve the second Palmerston Cabinet from the charge of useless inactivity ; but a perusal of the Queen's Speeches at the close of each Session conveys also the impression that the two Houses, without attempting heroic legislation, succeeded in getting through a vast amount of unpretentious but exceedingly useful work—Prisons Bills, Partnership Liability Bills, Crime Chargeability Bills, and so forth. Lord Westbury, one of the greatest of modern Lord Chancellors, made vigorous efforts at law reform, and though the result fell far short of his plans, he at any rate induced the public to take an interest in the technicalities of land transfer and the registration of title. To the Prime Minister, and also, though in a less degree, to the leader of the Opposition, must be assigned much of the credit for the business-like character of the debates. Though the average of oratorical ability was possibly not very high, the speeches were generally to the point, the discussions were never unduly protracted, and the Sessions, instead of dragging on into September, were generally over by the middle of August ; and once, in 1865, Parliament rose on the 6th of July. Halcyon were the nights for the most part, and their peacefulness was due to the unfailing tact with which the aged Premier, though not a frequent speaker, restored by his timely interventions a querulous House to a sense of dignity, and an angry House to good humour. If there was comparatively little wool in those days there was also little cry.

Another feature that the apologist of Lord Palmerston's second Ministry will dwell upon with pleasure is its freedom from jobbery. This we say, notwithstanding the scandal that was created by certain peccadilloes

of Lord Westbury during the last months of its active existence. The various cases of abuse of patronage were certainly proved to the hilt, though no attempt was made to establish a charge of personal corruption against the Lord Chancellor; but the incident did not damage the Government as a whole, and the nation proved by its verdict at the polls, that it fully accepted Lord Palmerston's explanation, that Lord Westbury had been advised to remain at his post in order that the question might be sifted by parliamentary inquiry. As to the propriety of Lord Palmerston's own distribution of patronage, both lay and ecclesiastical, the evidence contained in the numerous official letters reproduced by Mr. Asbley is most conclusive; he was no nepotist. His recommendations to ecclesiastical appointments were, no doubt, a rock of offence to the High Church party in general and to Bishop Wilberforce in particular; but the outcry amounted to no more than this—that the "Shaftesbury bishops" were chosen almost entirely from the Evangelical party. Even an undue partiality for one section of the Establishment would have been preferable to choices dictated by political or family interests; but Lord Shaftesbury, in his diary, disposes of the accusation. Altogether the charge was true, he said, of the first bishops; they were decidedly of an Evangelical character, but after Lord Palmerston's junction with the Peelites, that is after 1859, the best men were chosen, no matter to which wing of the Church they professed to belong.\*

And now for the most serious accusation that has been brought against Lord Palmerston by political

\* Hodder's *Life of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, vol. iii. pp. 196-200.

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thinkers—that he degraded public opinion. Now this, and similar charges, practically resolve themselves into two:—That Lord Palmerston approached matters of grave importance with levity, and that he deliberately left undone much that he ought to have done. To the former of them candour compels a reluctant assent; but even that assent need not necessarily be unqualified. For, in the first place, instances of misplaced flippancy, like the remarks at the Napier banquet, are unfortunately remembered far more easily, and lend themselves far more readily to quotation by the severe critic than passages of dignified earnestness. It is only just to recollect that outbreaks like the “honourable and reverend gentleman” speech were far rarer with Lord Palmerston during his last years, and never so accentuated. And if Lord Palmerston failed sometimes to strike a deeply reverberating note, the reason is, perhaps, to be found in the fact that he was always, in his latter days, compelled by the weakness of his eyesight to speak without preparation. But there were occasions on which he rose to a height worthy of his subject. The death of Cavour was one; and there is a good deal of distinction in some of his speeches at the time of the American war.

When we come to the charge that Lord Palmerston was associated with no great distinct policy, it might be sufficient to reply that during his first Ministry he had to deal with the Crimean war and the Mutiny; during the second he directed vast fiscal reforms, and it was certainly not entirely from motives of self-preservation that, when the Government was attacked by Mr. Disraeli for the mismanagement of the Schleswig-Holstein question, the old Premier pointed with pride to the financial triumphs of the time as a reason why Parliament

and the nation might reasonably continue to support him. Besides he was over four-score years of age when he died ; the ideals of his manhood had for the most part been translated into fact, and when a statesman is over seventy he does not readily adopt new programmes. Mr. Cobden reproached Lord Palmerston for not advocating the ballot ; he replied that he did not believe in the ballot, and that he, not Mr. Cobden, had been placed by the nation at the head of affairs.

It would [he said] no doubt be not at all right for followers to follow a leader from whom they differed, but it is too much to insist that the leader should follow them wherever they pleased. The hon. member says I have opposed the ballot I have done so ; and I did it because I unfortunately differ from him in opinion upon that measure. He believes the ballot to be a moral good. I believe it would have an immoral effect. If he can convince me I am wrong, I would be most ready to adopt his views, but until that time comes, sitting here, sent by those whom I represent, to act according to the best of my judgment, I must take leave to act upon my own judgment and to oppose a measure which I think would be injurious to the public interests.

It is, of course, undeniable that since Lord Palmerston passed away many extensive changes of unquestionable benefit have been effected, and many useful measures added to the statute book. But, without going into questions of the expediency of State interference and considerations of how far it is possible to make a people virtuous by acts of Parliament, it is surely only fair to urge that sufficient unto the day is the legislation thereof, and that the English, whose Constitution has been the growth of centuries, are the last nation in the world whom it would profit to be perpetually engaged in paroxysms of law-making. The constituencies of 1859 felt that enough had been done for the present in the cause of liberty, that they could linger awhile on the ebb tide of economic improvements. "It is

plain," the Premier said in 1864, "that there does not exist the same desire for organic change which was observable some time ago. The fact is that organic changes were introduced more as a means than as an end, the end being great improvement in the whole of our economical legislation. All such changes as have been desirable have long since been effected, as the result of our organic reforms, and therefore there is no such desire now for further innovations." He was perfectly right; for the Reform Bills passed since his day have been "dishing" measures passed by politicians for the discomfiture of their adversaries rather than to satisfy any real popular demand. At the General Election of 1865 came the first symptoms of the desire for a new advance, and then Lord Palmerston died, happy, perhaps, in the opportunity of his death. The old constituencies were, besides, keenly interested in foreign politics, and sufficiently enlightened to see that what was going on in the East or in the United States was of supreme moment to themselves. In that respect their successors have changed for the worse. And they were right in regarding Palmerston as a safe guardian of the national honour. For, unless the preceding pages have been written wholly in vain, it is almost superfluous to say here that he never ceased for a single moment to keep before the nation the great lesson that Empires are kept as they are gained, by courage, self-reliance, and the rejection of morbid self-consciousness.

His policy with regard to Ireland was one of simple common sense; he had no belief that legislation could fight against nature, but he did believe that a firm administration of the law would produce security and so attract capital to the country. In the last great

speech he ever made, his views were expounded with remarkable clearness. It contained an eloquent tribute to the talents and industry of the Irish peasantry, and it assigned the paramount reason for the continued emigration of the Irish to the peculiarities of their climate.

You cannot expect [he continued] that any artificial remedies which legislators can invent can reconstruct the laws of nature, and keep in one country a population which finds it to its advantage to emigrate to another. Things will find their level, and until by some means or other there shall be provided in Ireland the same remuneration for labour, and the same inducement to remain which are afforded by other countries, you cannot by any laws which you can devise prevent the people from seeking elsewhere a better condition of things than exists in their own country. We are told that tenant-right and a great many other things will do it. None of these things will have the slightest effect. As to tenant-right, I may be allowed to say that I think it is equivalent to landlord's wrong. Tenant-right, as I understand it to be proposed, would be little short of confiscation; and though it might cause the landlords to emigrate, it certainly would not keep the tenants at home. The real question is how can you create in Ireland that demand and reward for labour which would render the people of Ireland willing to remain at home, instead of emigrating to England or Scotland on the one hand, or to the North American States on the other. Nothing can do that except the influence of capital.

He was as firmly opposed to the creation of fixity of tenure by statute as was Mr. Gladstone when he introduced the Land Act of 1870. With regard to compensation for improvements, however, Lord Palmerston's Government in 1860 passed an important Act, by which, in cases where landlord and tenant agreed, compensation could be fixed by a Government valuer, and secured in the form of an annuity on the estate. Thus he believed that legislation could accomplish something for Ireland, though he shrank from banishing political economy to Jupiter and Saturn.

His views on the terribly vexed topic of Irish University education were equally moderate. Undenomina-

tional education was the only solution, and he thought that the conferment of degrees might safely be entrusted to the aggregate university body of the Queen's Colleges. The experience of Maynooth, "a place where young men were brought up to be bigoted in religion, to feel for Protestants theological hatred, and to feel political hatred against England," made him adverse to granting degrees to the Catholic College, even if, as Mr. Gladstone attempted to contrive in his Irish Education Bill, it formed one of a number of affiliated institutions. But he died before the questions advanced into the political foreground.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES.

1860-1863.

Lord Palmerston's distrust of Napoleon—Permanent and Special Reasons—Speech on the Fortifications Bill and Conversation with Count Flahault—The Anglo-French Expedition to China—The American Civil War—England's declaration of neutrality—The *Trent* and *Alabama* affairs—The Mexican expedition.

DISTRUST of France and of the Emperor of the French was the distinguishing feature of Lord Palmerston's foreign policy during the last five years of his life. And, though it may seem inconsistent that the Statesman who had been the pivot of the Anglo-French alliance during the Crimean war, should abruptly part company with his former friend and become his undisguised opponent, the Prime Minister was in reality no more inconsistent than when, at an earlier period of his career, he had thrown over the *entente cordiale* with Louis Philippe. For with Palmerston the interests of his country were all in all, and he would never have consented to surrender an infinitesimal part of them to further the designs of Louis Napoleon or anyone else. He had trusted the Emperor to the last; perhaps, during the Italian cam-

paign beyond the limits of prudence. But his eyes were opened by the annexation of Nice and Savoy, still more by the "natural frontiers" theory, which was then put forward as the reason for that act of Vandalism, and the additional violation of the arrangements of 1815 committed by Napoleon when he refused to hand over to Switzerland, Chablais and Faucigny, the northern districts of Savoy, which had been declared by the Congress of Vienna to share in the neutrality of the Helvetic Federation. The "natural frontiers" theory was evidently capable of being put into practice in several directions, practically towards the Rhine, where the resistance, thanks to the want of cohesion among the German states, would possibly be feeble in the extreme. The Cabinet was constrained to declare through the mouth of Lord John Russell that upon such an unsettlement of the peace of Europe, England would not pursue a policy of isolation.

Lord Palmerston was no milk-and-water enemy, and his distrust of the Emperor was undoubtedly to some degree exaggerated. Napoleon might have had "a mind like a rabbit-warren," but it did not necessarily follow, from his recent proceedings, that he had intended all along to "avenge Waterloo," and that his design was to beat "with our aid or with our concurrence or with our neutrality, first Russia and then Austria, and by dealing with them generously to make them his friends in any subsequent quarrel with us." That was a somewhat unsubstantial specimen of a deductive argument, and Lord Palmerston was in all probability equally under a delusion when he ascribed to the French Emperor the design of instigating Spain to seize Tangiers, and so, by occupying fortified points on each side of the gut of Gibraltar, of virtually shutting England out of the Medi-

terranean. His suspicions were also based upon a slight substratum of fact when he accused Napoleon, who, as mandatory of the Powers, had sent an expedition to put down a bloody and barbarous war of religion between the Druses and Maronites in Syria, of being actuated by the desire of permanently occupying that country. Lord Palmerston seems, in fact, to have hardly appreciated the position of the man of December. Napoleon was not ungrateful; he was fully conscious, as his letters to the Queen and the Prince Consort clearly prove, that he owed nearly everything to England. She had been the first power to give him a status; and without her make-weight, he would never have been able to pose, even for a moment, as the holder of the European balance. If the French alliance was useful to Lord Palmerston, the English alliance was to the Emperor as the breath of his nostrils.

At the same time there were both permanent and special reasons for regarding the Emperor of the French as an untrustworthy ally. The permanent reasons were compressed in the contradictions of his position. The elected of a *plébiscite*, the crowned ex-Carbonaro, was logically bound to assist subjects against the sovereigns, on the other hand, a ruler who claimed to govern by Divine right, was equally bound to uphold the royal, and particularly the Papal, power. He had thus no firm basis of action; and, as the author of the *coup d'état*, the patentee of a veiled autocracy, he was irresistibly driven to risky adventures abroad, so as to distract the French nation from the spectacle of ministerial corruption and financial mismanagement, in which the Second Empire was rapidly being engulfed. The man of December was, in short, developing into the man of Mexico and Sedan.

The special reasons were to be found in the vast naval preparations which were being hurried on in the French ports, and which evidently menaced a maritime power. It was in vain that the Emperor protested that his navy was not sufficient for his wants, and that Mr. Cobden, of course in perfect good faith, attempted to persuade the Cabinet that the alarm was entirely baseless.

We know [said Lord Palmerston, on the Fortifications Bill] that the utmost exertions are made and still are making, to create a navy very nearly equal to our own—a navy which cannot be required for purposes of defence for France, and which, therefore, we are justified in looking upon as a possible antagonist we may have to encounter—a navy which, under present arrangements, would provide to our neighbours the means of transporting within a very few hours a large and formidable number of troops to our coast.

And he made no disguise of the fact that the increased expenditure on our defences was necessitated by the attitude of France.

It is impossible for any man to cast his eyes over the face of Europe, and to see and hear what is passing, without being convinced that the future is not free from danger. It is difficult to say where the storm may burst; but the horizon is charged with clouds which betoken the possibility of a tempest. The Committee, of course, knows that in the main I am speaking of our immediate neighbours across the channel, and there is no use in disguising it. No one has any right to take offence at considerations and reflections which are purely founded upon the principles of self-defence.

A few months previously, Lord Palmerston had stated his meaning with even more definiteness in the well-known conversation with old Count Flahault, then French Ambassador in London, as they drove together to the House of Commons. He bluntly told him that it was impossible to trust the Emperor any longer; and that if war was forced upon England, England would fearlessly accept it.

“This was very spirited and becoming,” was the verdict of Greville in one of the last entries in his journal

upon an imperfect report of the conversation being transmitted to him by Lord Clarendon. And though it is proverbially difficult to prove a negative, the terms of the Emperor's letter of self-exculpation to Count Persigny of the 23rd of July 1860 fairly warrant the conclusion that in this case *post hoc* and *propter hoc* were identical, and that war was averted by Lord Palmerston's firm language, backed up by preparations for war. At all events, the relations between the two countries grew considerably less fraught with danger, and the international friendship was almost reconnected before the close of the year by the success of the joint Anglo-French expedition to China, under Sir Hope Grant and General Montauban, better known as Count Palikao. Pekin was taken, and the ratification of the important Treaty of Tien-tsin, which had been signed by Lord Elgin two years previously, was at length wrung from the Celestial Government.

The breach was, however, never completely healed, and it was well that the British Government continued to be on its guard against the dreamer of the Tuileries; otherwise, we should have been almost inevitably embroiled in the American Civil war. More than once in the course of that struggle, the Emperor of the French urged our Ministers to recognise the Southern States, but he was always met with a firm but courteous refusal. That refusal was greatly to their credit. There could be no doubt that there was in England a strong current of feeling in favour of the South, especially among the upper classes. Material interests may be considered to have influenced the commercial stratum of society more than the fact that the Virginians could trace descent from the Cavaliers. The closure of the Southern harbours would cut off the cotton trade, and

inflict vast losses upon manufacturers, if not, as actually occurred, famine upon their workmen. Mr. Gladstone gave expression to a very prevalent feeling, when, in his famous speech at Manchester, he declared that Mr. Jefferson Davis had made an army, had made a navy, and, more than that, had made a nation.

How far Lord Palmerston shared the views of his Chancellor of the Exchequer it is difficult to say with any approach to certainty. Mr. Ashley tells us that though he admired the American people, the politicians of the United States appeared to him to fail on the score of character; and he certainly would not have committed himself to remarks about the "unfortunate rapid movements" of the Federal troops at the battle of Bull's Run, unless he had anticipated a speedy triumph for the Confederate cause. All the more credit is due to him for having observed a complete neutrality at the outset of the struggle. A letter to Mr. Ellice establishes beyond all doubt the prudence of his motives. He was all for non-intervention until the "wire edge of the craving appetite for conflict had worn off"; and he pointed out that it was impossible to intervene upon any sound basis, except that of separation, the discussion of which would evidently be premature, or without committing ourselves to an acknowledgment of the principle of slavery, and the right to pursue fugitive slaves from State to State. But, it may be said, did not Her Majesty's Government, by the act of proclaiming neutrality, acknowledge the South as a belligerent power, and so virtually play into its hands? The answer is conclusive and complete. Unless the South was acknowledged as a belligerent power, there was obviously no war going on. If there was no war, the English Government could not be expected

to recognise the blockade of the Southern ports. The recognition of the South as a belligerent power was indeed to the advantage of the North, as its advocates discovered when, in the crisis of the English cotton-famine, numerous appeals were made to Ministers in the House of Commons to break the blockade, which was paralyzing the energies and stopping the supplies of the Confederate Government. Fortunately, Lord Palmerston and his colleagues stood firm; and sought relief for the deficiency, not in embroiling themselves in their neighbours' quarrel, but in drawing supplies of cotton from other parts of the world.

The labyrinths of international law had also to be threaded in the two chief causes of dispute between the English and United States Governments, the *Trent* and the *Alabama* affairs. In the first, Earl Russell, and, by implication, Lord Palmerston, behaved with the utmost promptitude and spirit. There could be no doubt whatever that Captain Wilkes was entirely in the wrong when he compelled the *Trent* to lay to, and carried off Mr. Slidell and Mr. Mason, the Confederate envoys, as prisoners on board the *San Jacinto*. It was a gross violation of the law of nations, an arbitrary assertion of that right of search which had been abandoned by the United States, and against which, when exercised by Lord Palmerston, for the benefit of kidnapped negroes, they had never ceased to protest. There was, besides, an impression abroad, which the Prime Minister at first shared, that the deed was not the spontaneous act of a hot-headed captain, but that it had been deliberately planned and executed by the United States Government. Under the circumstances Earl Russell was amply justified in sending out a demand for an apology and the liberation of the envoys, and in limiting the answer to

a period of seven days. Nor can any objection be taken to the tone of his despatch to Lord Lyons, after it had been toned down by the advice of the dying Prince Consort; even the American Secretary, Mr. Seward, acknowledged it to be "courteous and friendly—not dictatorial or menacing," and his apology was ample. But why send 8,000 or 10,000 troops to Canada, asked Mr. Cobden, after the United States Minister, Mr. Adams, had told the British Government that the act of Captain Wilkes was not sanctioned by the Washington Cabinet. Lord Palmerston's answer was, as usual, the sound one, that peace is best preserved by showing that you are not afraid of war.

The American Minister did not tell us that the act of Captain Wilkes was disapproved; he did not tell us that it would be disavowed; he did not tell us that the insult to the British flag would be atoned for by the surrender of the persons who were taken from the British ship *Trent*. Therefore, the communication which Mr. Adams made, and made with the very best intentions, was not a communication upon which we would have been justified in acting, so far as to forego any measure of precaution which in our opinion was necessary. But everybody recollects the ferment which prevailed in the United States, the language held at public meetings, the honours paid to Captain Wilkes at the Theatre, the language held in Congress, and also the letter of the Secretary to the Naval Department, approving the conduct of that officer. Then, I say, we were justified in assuming that that difficulty might not terminate in a satisfactory and amicable manner. That being the case, I hold that we should have been extremely blamable if we had not taken the precautions which we adopted. . . . We should only have been misleading the American Government into the supposition that after all we might not really be in earnest. And I do believe that the measures we took were most materially conducive to opening their eyes to the consequences of a refusal, thereby enabling their calm judgment to determine upon the course which it was most for their interest that they should adopt.

Lord Lyons, who was not an alarmist, and who had in addition the advantage of being on the spot, was of precisely the same opinion.

Of course the *Trent* affair left bitter memories behind it, and their workings are to be seen conspicuously in the controversy about the *Alabama* and the other privateers which were built for the South in English dockyards, and sometimes manned by British crews. If England had the law on her side in the matter of the *Trent*, America had no less the principle of equity with her in the case of the *Alabama*. But this Lord Palmerston and Earl Russell hardly appreciated enough; and when the frigate started on her destroying career from Birkenhead, without the smallest attempt at concealment as to her real character, and in spite of the vigorous protests of Mr. Adams, the Prime Minister based his defence on a textual exposition of the Foreign Enlistment Act. You could not, he said, seize a vessel under the act unless you have evidence on oath confirming a just suspicion.

That evidence was wanting in this case. The American Minister came to my noble friend the Foreign Secretary, and said, "I tell you this, and I tell you that, I 'm sure of this, and I 'm sure of that"; but when he was asked to produce evidence on oath, which was the only thing on which we could ground any proceedings, he said that the information was furnished him confidentially, that he could not give testimony on oath, but that we ought nevertheless to act on his assertions and suspicions, which he was confident were well founded. What would happen if we were to act in that way? When a vessel is seized unjustly and without just grounds, there is a process of law to come afterwards, and the Government may be condemned in heavy costs and damages. Why are we to undertake an illegal measure which may have had those consequences, simply to please the agent of a foreign Government?

The position was full of difficulties; but it was obvious that breaches of neutrality were being committed, and that it was the duty of the English Government to put a stop to them. The Americans retorted that self-preservation was the first law of nature; and, though Mr.

Adams could not effect the detention of the *Alabama*, he enforced that of two ironclad rams under threat of war. Even if the dispute ended there, the British Government would have come out of it second best; but, as everyone knows, it dragged on until it was finally settled against England on most points by the Geneva tribunal. Lord Palmerston did not live to see that day; and as the discussion of "might-have-beens" is invariably sterile, it is not very profitable to speculate at length on which of the alternatives, war or arbitration, he would have elected to adopt. One thing is quite certain, that he would not have submitted for a moment to the monstrous Indirect Claims. The management of the *Alabama* affair by the Palmerston Government was a blunder, but the recognition of the South, to which several of its members were apparently by no means adverse, would have been a worse one, and, on the whole, they may be considered to have come out of an exceedingly trying crisis with a fair amount of credit. It was but natural, as the Prime Minister said, that when we endeavoured to maintain a perfect neutrality between two parties who had quarrelled, we should satisfy neither. At least we had shown by a prompt despatch of troops to Canada, and by the vote for the fortification of Quebec, which was one of the last acts of Lord Palmerston's administration, that we were not to be cowed by any manifestations of spread-eagleism on the part of the American press and people.

Though the Ministry were not to be lured into a recognition of the Southern States of America to oblige the Emperor of the French, they committed themselves to a participation in the Mexican expedition, the arguments for which really, though not ostensibly, rested on the supposition that the South would triumph, and

in the hour of victory would be glad to strengthen herself by an alliance with the gimcrack Empire which he proposed to erect on the ruins of the Mexican Republic. In so doing, they undoubtedly embittered their relations with the North, and became entangled in an enterprise from which they were speedily obliged to beat a retreat. Not that the grievances of England, France, and Spain, the signatories of the Convention of 1861, against the Mexican Republic, were not perfectly genuine. During the anarchy which for years had desolated that unhappy State, English subjects had been exposed to all kinds of outrage, and redress had never been obtained. Agreements which had been made by various presidents to set aside a certain portion of the customs receipts for the satisfaction of foreign bondholders, had never been fully carried out; the house of the British Legation had been robbed of part of the money that was actually paid, and another portion had been carried off while on its way to the coast. At the same time, Lord Palmerston's Government were hardly well-advised in pushing matters to an extremity at that particular moment. The prospect of French and Spanish co-operation was perhaps tempting; but, on the other hand, a war with the North appeared to be imminent over the *Trent* affair, and the circumstances of Mexico herself appeared to counsel delay. For, bad as the government of the Red Indian Juarez was, it was the government of a strong man, and should have been allowed time to make head against its clerical antagonists, instead of being coerced to satisfy wrongs which had been committed for the most part by its predecessors. Besides, there lurked in the minds of two of the signatory Powers a shrewd suspicion that the third was not strictly to be relied upon, and it was found advisable to

insert an article in the Convention by which the three Powers bound themselves not to interfere with the form of government established in Mexico. When it appeared that these suspicions were only too well based, that Napoleon had not only determined to overthrow the Mexican Republic, but actually had his nominee, the unfortunate Archduke Maximilian, in waiting, there was nothing left for the English Government but to withdraw themselves from the Convention, and their small force of 700 marines from the expedition. At least there was no hesitation on the part of the Cabinet, and they extricated themselves from a dangerous enterprise without loss of dignity.

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## CHAPTER XV.

## POLAND AND SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.

1863-1865.

The Polish Rebellion—Policy of the Cabinet—The proposed European Congress—The Schleswig-Holstein Question—Motives of the Powers—English advice to Denmark—The Cabinet determines on neutrality—The Conference of London—Lord Palmerston on the state of Europe—The Danish debate—Palmerston's last victory—The General Election of 1865—Lord Palmerston's last illness and death—Conclusion.

FROM the hour of the withdrawal of the English contingent from the Mexican expedition to the last day of his life, Lord Palmerston never laid aside his distrust of the Emperor Napoleon. It became a fixed idea with him, and when opportunities presented themselves for reconstituting the alliance of the Western Powers he deliberately rejected them. Such an opportunity was the Polish rebellion of 1863. The cause of the insurgents, gallantly maintained against overwhelming numbers, was extremely popular in England; it was favoured by statesmen of all shades of opinion, and was the theme of enthusiastic resolutions passed at swollen mass meetings. Food for eloquent periods was especially to be found in the proceedings of the new

Prussian Minister, Herr von Bismarck, who had turned the occasion to his own ends, and at the same time prevented the spread of the rebellion, by proposing to the Russian Chancellor—and the proposal was gladly accepted—that the two Governments should sign a convention authorising the troops of each nation to cross their respective frontiers in pursuit of fugitive rebels. This grim method of exterminating the revolt aroused a perfect storm of indignation throughout the country; and a war for the liberation of Poland would undoubtedly have been very popular. Nor should we have gone to the battle without allies. France would have plunged enthusiastically into the struggle, for affection for the Poles had been for centuries a national proclivity, and her ruler was drawn in the same direction by the double consideration that the reconstruction of Poland was a Napoleonic tradition, and that success on the Vistula would detract attention from the failure imminent in Mexico. As there was no fear of the movement extending into Galicia, the Austrian Government would certainly not have departed from a friendly neutrality.

Lord Palmerston made no secret of his sympathies with the insurgents. He wrote a letter to Baron Brünnow in which he bluntly told him that he regarded the Polish rebellion as the just punishment inflicted by Heaven on Russia for her numerous attempts to stir up revolution in the Christian Provinces of the Porte. In the House of Commons he was equally outspoken against Prussia. He hoped that the February convention would not be carried into execution, “because such an interference of Prussia with what was then passing in Poland would excite, as it had already excited, great condemnation everywhere, and if that

conventional interference were followed by acts it would cast discredit on the Government of Prussia." But the Prime Minister and his colleagues were determined not to commit themselves to any threat of intervention. They thoroughly distrusted the Emperor of the French, and declined his invitation to address, in concert with Austria, a violent note of remonstrance to the Prussian Government. The Premier, in a letter to the King of the Belgians, described the invitation as a trap. They felt, also, that it was useless to engage in a war of which the object would have been the establishment of Poland as an independent State, when the dissensions among the insurgents proved that the basis for such a State was altogether wanting. Under the circumstances, the diplomatic action of the three Powers was barren of result. Lord Palmerston helped to frame some able despatches the aim of which was to convince Prince Gortschakoff that the promises of a constitution made to the Poles at the Congress of Vienna had never been carried out; Austria took the lead in declaring that Poland was a source of never-ending disquietude to Europe; and the three Powers agreed upon six suggestions of reform which they urged in concert upon the Russian Government. But, unaccompanied by a menace of war, their remonstrances at Berlin and St. Petersburg were not treated with much respect, and signally failed to ameliorate the lot of Poland.

Lord Palmerston was quite as adverse to the next adventure of the Emperor of the French, his proposal that the treaties of 1815 should be submitted to a European Congress. It was known that Napoleon had been brooding over the idea for many years, and when it was at last put into shape it certainly contained a certain amount of plausibility. There was justice in

his contention that most of the arrangements of the treaties of Vienna were destroyed, modified, misunderstood, or menaced. But directly Lord Palmerston's keen intellect played round the proposal he saw its absurdity. He pointed out in the House of Commons that unanimity was extremely unlikely, and that a single dissentient voice would upset every suggestion before the Congress. In a letter to the King of the Belgians he described the assembling of a Congress as a measure inapplicable to the present state of Europe. With regard to past modifications of the treaties, some, such as the independence of Belgium, and the creation of the kingdom of Italy, required no sanction ; others, such as the annexation of Cracow by Austria, we should not care to sanction. With regard to the future, an infinite number of squabbles and animosities would arise, especially if possible changes of territory were taken into consideration—for instance, if France were to ask for the Rhine provinces, Austria for Bosnia or Moldo-Wallachia, Spain for Gibraltar. The Congress was, therefore, curtly declined by Earl Russell in the name of our Government, and the Emperor had to digest his mortification as best he could.

Thus, while the Northern Powers were united, those of Western Europe were hostile and divided. Bismarck had everything in his favour when he proceeded to tear up the Treaty of London and to force on the solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question. Viewed by the light of later experience, it is impossible to pronounce that treaty to have been other than a mistake. It was drawn up without sufficient knowledge and precautions ; it attempted to perpetuate a wholly obsolete state of affairs. In the end, the separation of the Duchies from Denmark was a benefit to Europe. But it would be

unjust to blame Lord Palmerston for not having foreseen the great things that Bismarck was to accomplish for Germany. There was nothing in the past of the new director of Prussian statesmanship which designated him as a man likely to emancipate his country from the unworthy policy which she had pursued since the Crimean war. Lord Palmerston may be forgiven for not having seen in Bismarck's treatment of the Schleswig-Holstein question any more elevated feeling than a desire to get Kiel as a German harbour, and for being, therefore, determined to maintain the integrity of Denmark at the cost of Prussia. Nor does the fact that he was wrong put the rest of Europe in the right. The treaty had been mainly the work of a Russian diplomatist, Baron Brünnow; though it had not been signed by the German Federation as a body, several of the States had afterwards acceded to it, and Prussia and Austria had signed as great Powers. He could hardly have foreseen that when the treaty was put to the test, Russia would shrink from her engagements, bought off by the co-operation of Bismarck in the suppression of the Polish rebellion; that Austria and the German Diet would blindly play into the hands of Prussia, and thereby bring upon themselves ultimate disaster and extinction. If English statesmanship was at a discount during this period, that of Austria and Saxony was so in a double measure; and it is difficult on any grounds to justify the support given by the German Diet to the Augustenburg candidate for the Duchies, the son of the one agnate who had expressly resigned his rights of succession. Bismarck alone knew what he was about.

If the Treaty of London was a mistake, the English Cabinet at all events tried to carry it out with the utmost good faith. It fully acknowledged the position

of Schleswig and Holstein as members of the German Federation; the King of Denmark undertook not to incorporate Schleswig with the rest of his monarchy, and guaranteed to the Duchies the continuance of their autonomy. And the efforts of Earl Russell to prevent the Danes from violating the treaty were unceasing. He protested again and again against the schemes of Frederick VII. for the "Danification" of the Duchies; he sent a special mission to dissuade him from the famous patent of 1863 by which he incorporated Schleswig in the kingdom of Denmark. When the German Diet decreed in consequence "federal execution" in Holstein, the British Cabinet made no attempt to prevent it, and their offer of mediation was made in a purely friendly spirit. Earl Russell also warned Christian IX. against the consequences of following the evil example of his predecessor; but his counsellors refused to listen to good advice, and reaped the consequences of their obstinacy. If they had shown moderation, they would have put the German Powers entirely in the wrong, and Denmark would have kept the Duchies, at all events, for the time being.

The conduct of the Danes was undoubtedly actuated by a belief that England would draw the sword on their behalf. And at the close of the previous Session they had received a certain amount of countenance from Lord Palmerston, though not enough to justify their foolhardiness.

It is impossible [he said, in the House of Commons] for any man who looks at the map of Europe, and who knows the great interest which the Powers of Europe feel in the independence of the Danish monarchy, to shut his eyes to the fact that war begun about a petty quarrel concerning the institutions of Holstein would, in all probability, not end where it began, but might draw after it consequences which all parties who began it would be exceedingly sorry to have

caused. . . . We are convinced—I am convinced at least—that if any violent attempt were made to overthrow these rights and interfere [with the independence of Denmark], those who made that attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend.

Lord Palmerston, as is well known, afterwards explained that what he had intended to convey was not a threat of intervention, but a prophecy that some Power or other would intervene. The explanation was, of course, plausible; but whatever the meaning of the utterance, it was certainly rather injudicious. Still Count Beust has recently shown that Lord Palmerston was less the cause of their stubborn resistance than Bismarck, who, to further his own ends, had mendaciously assured the Danes that England had actually threatened Germany with intervention, if hostilities should be opened.\* When Lord Palmerston spoke, he reckoned upon Russia and France; but when the war broke out, he found that Sweden was the only ally upon whom England and Denmark could depend. Russia had been bought off; and Napoleon, piqued by the refusal of England to attend his Congress, declined to stir in the quarrel, though definite overtures were twice made to him. Those overtures would have confined the war to the assistance of Denmark, for Lord Palmerston, even to save the Danes, would not sanction the conquest of the Rhenish Prussia by France, to the peril of Holland and Belgium. After the refusal of Napoleon, Lord Palmerston came reluctantly to the conclusion that the Danes must be left to their fate.

The truth is [he wrote to Earl Russell on February 13th, 1864] that to enter into a military conflict with all Germany on continental ground would be a serious undertaking. If Sweden and Denmark

\* *Count Beust's Memoirs*, vol. i., pp. 241-42.

were actively co-operating with us, our twenty thousand men ought to do a good deal; but Austria and Prussia would bring two hundred thousand or three hundred thousand into the field, and would be joined by the smaller German States.

The position was somewhat humiliating, but as there had been no pledge that we should come to the assistance of the Danes alone, there had been no breach of faith. And what diplomatic influence England could exercise in favour of the Danes, she exercised without stint. By his personal authority with the Austrian ambassador, Lord Palmerston prevented the Austrian fleet from entering the Baltic and bombarding Copenhagen. At the Conference of London, Lord Clarendon nearly saved the situation by his proposal that Denmark should cede Holstein and the German part of Schleswig. The terms were better than the Danes ultimately obtained, and they were accepted by the German plenipotentiaries. But statesmanship at Copenhagen was unable to recognise accomplished facts, and from first to last the efforts of English diplomacy on behalf of the Danes were doomed to futility.

It was least with no petulant *quos ego* that Lord Palmerston accepted the defeat of his policy. Writing to Earl Russell the following year he dealt with the fate which was to be hoped for the Duchies, and at the same time indulged in one of the most remarkable political forecasts that has ever been penned. It was better, he considered, that Schleswig-Holstein should be absorbed into Prussia, than be formed into a petty German State.

Prussia is too weak as she now is ever to be honest or independent in her action, and, with a view to the future, it is desirable that Germany, in the aggregate, should be strong, in order to control those two ambitious and aggressive Powers, France and Russia, that press upon her west and east. As to France, we know how restless and aggressive she is, and how ready to break loose for Belgium, for the

Rhine, for anything which she would be likely to get without too great an exertion. As to Russia, she will, in due time, become a Power almost as great as the old Roman empire. She can become mistress of all Asia, except British India, whenever she chooses to take it; and when enlightened arrangements have made her revenue proportioned to her territory, and railways have abridged distances, her command of men will become enormous, her pecuniary means gigantic, and her power of transporting armies over great distances most formidable. Germany ought to be strong in order to resist Russian aggression, and a strong Prussia is essential to German strength.

This letter has not inaptly been called Lord Palmerston's legacy to the nation.

The failure of the ministerial policy as a whole had been undeniable. It abounded in miscalculations and misapprehensions. Herr von Bismarck had been under-valued, the possibility of foreign co-operation had been too confidently anticipated, and the interests at stake had been misunderstood. Lord Palmerston did not discover that it would, on the whole, have been to the advantage of Denmark to be quit of a population which had long been discontented and difficult to govern, until after the failure of the Conference. The Opposition naturally seized the opportunity to challenge the proceedings of the Government. As at the time of the Don Pacifico affair, they were successful in the House of Lords, but suffered defeat in the House of Commons, through the skill and resource of Lord Palmerston. The victory was won by sheer generalship. Mr. Disraeli's attack was extremely telling, and ministers found it advisable to escape his condemnatory resolution by accepting a colourless amendment moved by Mr. Kinglake. The manœuvre was transparent, but it was entirely successful. In support of the amendment the old Prime Minister made a remarkable speech, winding up the debate in the early morning of the 9th of

July. As usual, he spoke without the aid of a single note, and with the evident aim to be clear and convincing rather than brilliant and antithetical. It is not altogether correct to say that he dropped the questions immediately connected with the vote of censure almost immediately, that would have been an affront to the intelligence of the House, which so accomplished a master of Parliaments would be the last man to commit. As a matter of fact, more than half his speech dealt with the Danish question, and he made out a case which, if not altogether convincing, was distinctly reasonable. And then he proceeded to the main point of his speech. Why had not the Opposition proposed a direct vote of want of confidence? In that case he would have been able to show that during the five years during which his Government had been honoured with the confidence of the House and had carried on the Government, the country had continued in an unexampled state of prosperity. In a telling summary he proceeded to take the Radicals captive by showing that on general, and especially on financial grounds, he and his colleagues had deserved well of their country. The Opposition cried "Question," but, as Mr. Ashley points out, the arguments had a good deal of bearing on the main question—the division. It is pathetic to notice that Lord Palmerston in conclusion made use once more of the argument which he had introduced with such telling effect in the Don Pacifico speech:—

I quite admit that hon. gentlemen opposite are perfectly entitled to make a great struggle for power. It is an honourable struggle, and I make it no matter of reproach. They are a great party, comprising a great number of men of ability and influence in the country, and they are perfectly entitled when they think the prize is within their

reach, to make an attack on those who hold it. But, on the other hand, I say that we have not done anything to deserve that the prize shall be taken from us.

The Government escaped defeat by a majority of eighteen, and Lord Palmerston was secure for the brief remainder of his life. After the following session, which was for the most part uneventful, Parliament, having peacefully lived out its time, was dissolved on July 6th, 1865. At the General Election which followed, Lord Palmerston, whose popularity with the nation had become almost an article of faith, was once more returned for Tiverton, and secured a further lease of power for the Liberal party, though with a considerable increase of the Radical wing. But the veteran statesman was not destined to lead the party in another Parliament. He had nearly completed his eighty-first year, and had been a member of every administration, except those of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Derby, since 1807. Already his iron frame had begun to show signs of giving way. He had been very ill at the time of the death of the Prince Consort, and his illness was certainly increased by his overpowering anxiety and grief. But he spent the whole of his eightieth birthday on horseback; and earlier in the year he rode from Cambridge House to Harrow, trotting the distance, nearly twelve miles, within the hour. During the Session of 1865, however, he showed signs of feebleness, keeping to his post with great difficulty; and, after the General Election, he retired to Brocket, in Hertfordshire, a place which Lady Palmerston had inherited from Lord Melbourne. There the gout became very serious, and he made it worse by going out for a ride before he had fairly recovered from an attack. Finally, a chill brought on inflammation; and, though

on October the 17th he rallied wonderfully, in the night his case became hopeless, and shortly before eleven in the morning of the 18th he died. An interesting account of his last moments is to be found in the life of Lord Shaftesbury, and the description of the great philanthropist praying over the great statesman is one that, once read, is not easily forgotten.

Lord Palmerston was buried in Westminster Abbey, and four years later Lady Palmerston was laid by his side. His funeral took place on October 27th, amidst a manifestation of popular sympathy, which showed how strong were the ties which bound the nation to its aged counsellor. As the coffin sank into the grave, a dark storm broke over the Abbey, until, as the service drew to its close, the sun appeared once more. His tomb is in the North Transept, that quarter which pious custom has reserved for England's statesmen, near the last resting-places of the great men who before him upheld the honour of England in days of doubt and despair—the noble Chatham, and his nobler son, and Canning, and the much-misunderstood Castlereagh. Near it stands his fine statue by Jackson, confronted by that of Canning; like a pair of sentinels, ever at their post, and ever on the watch.

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